

Eunoia

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Eunoia

by [MalevolentReverie](#)

Summary

Rey Kenobi, an underachieving college student becomes tangled in a twisted web with her astronomy professor, Kylo Ren, who is hiding a dark secret. THIS STORY CONTAINS EXTREME VIOLENCE AND NON-CON.

This story connects to the "Something Wicked" multiverse w/Pierre Holt & Natalie Taylor.

*Based upon an original fiction written by me.

Notes

Here's the serial killer Kylo Ren fanfic absolutely no one wanted except me.

This is the WORST (as in, most graphic/fucked up) of my fanfics. Everyone sucks. Leia and Han suck, Kylo sucks, only Rey isn't a shithead. This is good to read if you like heavy angst and exploring things that drive bad people to do bad things. THIS IS EXTREMELY GRAPHIC. KYLO COMMITS MURDER MANY TIMES. AND SEXUAL ASSAULT. YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED.

Rey's POV follows "Invictus" by William Ernest Henley.

Kylo's POV follows "The Tyger" by William Blake.

We get right out of the gates with Kylo's POV and the two typically switch back and forth each chapter. THE FIRST CHAPTER IS EXTREMELY VIOLENT. YOU. HAVE. BEEN. WARNED.

The Tyger

There are nine pints of blood in the average adult woman.

The hot essence of Hannah dripped in crimson globules from my trembling hands as I considered precisely what percentage of her fluid I had spilt. Nine pints—a reasonable amount for a female of sixteen years with a body mass index in the normal range—I could confidently conclude her heart had seen all nine of those pints when it beat blood to each corner of her small frame.

A quaint family laughed on her flickering television as I twisted the numbers nimbly in my mind. It was always best to begin with the Achilles' tendon to ensure the woman in question wouldn't do something silly, like try to escape. My eyes flickered down to her hastily skewered stomach that was still in the process of gurgitation, bubbling with recently expired blood that spilled in long lines across her pink bed sheets to pool upon the tan carpet below.

Nine pints. Achilles' tendon: sliced. Stomach: sliced. Throat: *carefully* sliced. My eyes roamed across Hannah's staring, cold blue eyes to her mouth, still curved into an eternal scream. Ah, blood had even braved its own path to her orifice, trickling along her drying lips to the plush pillow below.

I puckered my lips. Nine pints. I imagined I had spilled two, perhaps three pints on my own clothing in my uncharacteristically messy kill. It was coating my hands like thick, hot gloves, seeping into each available crease of my palms. She had commented on my hands and informed me they were large. I merely smiled and tilted my head in the pleasing way women sought. Submission.

Sweet Hannah was a precocious girl from a southern town she had longed to escape. I had uncovered her during a peaceful trip through the park, where she was dozing behind a bush. Her features appealed to me in the correct fashion: short stature, blue irises, pale flesh, lips that quivered when she spoke. It was far easier to dispose of women society wouldn't miss. Runaway teenage girls were my favorite indulgence, easy quarry that was rather difficult to find.

I was straddling Hannah's rapidly cooling body as I pondered her. Slowly, I leaned forward to draw a line of blood from the edge of her hairline to the tip of her nose. It was time for me to begin being festive with my girls. After all, it was nearly Christmas.

"Six and three-quarters pints," I murmured. "Two and one-quarters pints left for a margin of error."

I rose from the creaky bed with my hands held high like a surgeon to clean the blood off in the bathroom. It was quite a mess. Mercifully, I had inherited my mother's precision for detail and would be sure to dry every drop of Hannah's blood before leaving for my own home. Not a fingerprint would be left. A hair had not fallen from my head. I would never allow myself to commit such a treacherous mistake, even in the throes of passion.

The weak light in the bathroom illuminated my hyper vigilant features. The hours after a kill always left me in a lucid state of utter euphoria. I idly examined my dark hair, mussed terribly from wrestling Hannah to the bed when she noticed the glint of a knife in my belt loop. The weapon was still dug several inches into the weak flesh between her ribs.

Thus, I spent the rest of my evening systematically defacing Hannah's corpse. I began with the teeth because they were the most gruesome bit—ripping out molars raised large quantities of dead blood. I'd grown more accustomed to the process and had the dexterity of a dentist, removing each

clue with a quick flick of the wrist. They were all collected in a Mason jar and would be destroyed.

Each pad of her fingers was thoroughly burned to prevent a matching test, and I cut off her tongue in the event the police department became desperate enough to match it as well. A runaway may be registered in their database. I could not take the risk. The tongue joined the teeth in my jar and I also withdrew my knife in a fluid motion, allowing distended fluid to leak out. Rapid decomposition.

The face required a bit of breaking and more serious burns to disfigure my dear Hannah enough that she would not be properly identified. At the beginning of my career, I had invested time into draining the corpse and dismembering it to scatter the parts, but I had come across a delightful piece of property with a convenient swamp in my backyard. Destroying the body was my paranoia at hand. She would be buried in muck and grime within one week.

Whistling merrily, I rolled Hannah onto a thick, plush blanket to obscure her on my way out. I placed her near the door to begin the long, complicated process of scrubbing away her blood. Some found removing it to be a challenge they abhorred. I was quite fond of scrubbing away each sign of my crime until there was nothing left but a spotless floor and equally clean mattress. I stripped the sheets and bring them along—the maid would roll her eyes and assume I was a greedy guest.

The identifiable remains fit neatly in the blankets I had encased Hannah in. I smoothed her blonde hair away from her face before changing my mind and pushing it closer around her features. I'd never been ignorant enough to select a motel with cameras, but the desk attendants could be pesky.

I gently embraced Hannah as if she was asleep on my way out the door, feigning the concern of a married man for his ill wife. The young man at the front desk, who was flipping through a magazine, though nothing of our disappearance and seemed to smile faintly. Gentle, gentle. The key was to become one of them; to feel as they did. Love crippled them.

On the drive home, I listened to Bach to soothe my boiling excitement. I'd had my fill of her. She was willing to have sex with me, which was a severe disappointment and led to my unfettered psychotic rage. Nine pints of blood and I had split nearly seven. It was truly a night to be remembered.

A series of multicolored lights flashed in my rearview mirror.

My blue eyes shifted lazily to the police officer driving up behind me and my pulse did not quicken. Ah, a routine traffic stop. My wife was slumbering peacefully in the back seat, swaddled in blankets and clutching her own teeth and decaying tongue. Keep quiet, Hannah.

I pulled over politely and kept my hands on the steering wheel as the young officer emerged from his vehicle. He spoke into his radio before approaching and was soon standing at my passenger window, hands on his hips in a dominating manner. I smiled at him and pressed the mechanism to lower my window to allow him to peer inside my dark car.

"Are you aware of how fast you were driving, sir?" he asked.

"No, I'm afraid I wasn't." I sighed, squeezing my eyes shut to the right degree to incite sympathy. "My wife isn't feeling well and I'm only trying to bring her home. I'm terribly sorry, officer."

The police man glanced in the back seat and flinched. "Sorry about that. Do you want an escort?"

"No, thank you. May I leave now? I apologize for taking up your time."

How they loved when I stroked their egos. The man smiled and waved me on, permitting me to

continue my drive to my quiet home on the edge of the woods. Fool.

The gravel crackled under my sedan's tires as I pulled into the spot before my garage, where I was not stupid enough to carry out any killings. It was the first place the authorities would look in the event I was captured and that was becoming fainter with each passing day. I'd begun my spree at the age of 18 and had yet to be even vaguely considered ten years later. I was a scientist and perfectionist, a dangerous combination that the police could only wish to capture.

My home was simple: two stories with two bedrooms on the upper floor and one full bathroom with another half bath. It helped add to my unassuming appearance and I had no neighbors for miles around. The placement couldn't have been better, until I discovered my swamp.

I lifted Hannah from the back seat with ease and threw her over my shoulder, catching the jar of evidence before it fell upon the ground. Crickets sang to one another as I walked silently through my backyard toward the thick forest. A quantifiable part of the population was frightened of two things in conjunction: shadows and the woods, which personified many horror movies.

Nocturnal creatures watched my dark sacrament. I carelessly dumped Hannah's body into the black water that was teeming with muck and undesirable bacteria waiting for an easy meal. The blanket remained with me—I would look suspicious buying them in bulk. I unscrewed the cap of the jar and poured her identifiable remains into the sludge. She was already sinking into the abyss.

When I was certain I had disposed of every important article, I returned to my home. Leaves crunched underfoot. Snow hadn't arrived in Washington yet. Perhaps it wouldn't be a white Christmas.

It was serene living in the wilderness. Though I was close to a large city, Washington State was still vastly covered in untouched forest and other such wilds most people were never privy to. I idly unbuttoned my jacket to reveal my bloodstained clothes. It was a pity. Cleaning the filth from them was far more difficult than scrubbing it from the fibers of a carpet. They would have to be burned or drowned along with Hannah's body. I could not risk being discovered as others had.

There was one in particular who had become too high-profile and unveiled himself: he was a pontificator, vastly involved in himself and the limelight. I sat in my favorite armchair and withdrew a cigarette from my bloody breast pocket before flicking on the television to watch the latest coverage. Some fool from Europe as well: Russia, if I wasn't mistaken.

"Nikolai Gunter," I scoffed. "What a ludicrous name. No wonder he was tossed in the nearest asylum."

However, my fellow hunter was on the other side of the country, reaping what he had sown years ago. I was the quiet type of predator, preferring to stalk in the shadows and lure with kind words and gentle phrases rather than brute force. When they were trapped, I was free to indulge myself.

I dashed ashes into my tray and remained before the television some time before leaving to take a shower. The floorboards creaked underneath my feet. The home had belonged to an old woman for many years when it was put on the market. I didn't mind. Whatever facets of my life kept me far from public interest sufficed.

The water did nothing to soothe my gnawing hunger. I gazed impassively at the white wall of my shower as water cascaded down my head, occasionally running into my eyes. My black hair was plastered to my head—I imagined I looked like a destitute puppy. Nonchalantly, I ran my fingers along the ridges of my abdomen and admired my easily attained physique. The structure was common in my family. It allowed my father to drunkenly decapitate my mother.

When I was clean, I stepped from my shower onto a clean towel and used another to dry my body. I deposited both into the appropriate bin and clothed myself in a loose t-shirt and boxers for bed. It was going to be a difficult day at work with my lack of sleep and dissatisfaction. My hunger was nearly impossible to abate. It threatened to consume me alive.

I crept between my grey sheets and stared at the ceiling. It simply wouldn't do. How on earth would I teach college students astronomy when I was yearning to eviscerate them?

Invictus

Chapter Notes

kylo ren has blue eyes sorry they're important to the story lol

“Rey Kenobi, will you slow down?!”

A car beeped at me in a long, angry peal as I veered violently to the left to pass them, throwing my best friend against the passenger side door. Rose screamed dramatically and I quickly straightened out all four wheels of my old SUV when I slid seamlessly into a new lane with faster traffic. The Katy Perry blasting from my speakers was making me an even worse driver than normal.

“This wouldn’t be a problem if the old people leaving for vacation would get outta my way,” I said loudly over the music.

Rose furiously pushed her recently black hair away from her face, fuming mad. She wouldn’t talk to me the entire time we were at classes. What a bummer she could be. I winked at her and checked my own reflection in the rearview while casually tailgating another SUV driver. I’d wound my shoulder-length brown hair into an intricate braid to celebrate the last day of classes before vacation.

Traffic was usually at least bearable in Washington but when winter came around everyone and their brother left for Florida. Rose was one of those people, abandoning me to splash around in the Atlantic with her family while I glared at the unwelcome Pacific.

My parents didn’t have that kind of money: I’d only been able to get into a state-funded college with heaps of financial aid, and even then it wasn’t my cup of tea. I liked to be outside—hiking, kayaking, fishing; whatever I could find to keep myself occupied. Sitting in a stuffy classroom was boring. Rose wanted nothing more than to study her brains out.

“If you crash this you’re going to have to pick up extra shifts,” Rose snapped, clutching the support bar near the roof of my old car. “And I know how much you hate working at Luna’s.”

“Oh, it’s just stupid drug store stuff. Put things on shelves, smile at people, get paid.”

“You’re too nonchalant about things. If you get fired, you’re never going to be able to keep this car, and then you won’t be able to go to your precious parties and—”

I banked to the right and Rose flew into the door again.

We managed to find a parking space on the huge campus and ran to our separate classes. Rose was a pre-med major well on her way to becoming a doctor. I was taking whatever classes appealed to me, and that gave a lot of flexibility. I’d chosen a really difficult one that I thought wouldn’t be too tough and made a huge error. Astronomy was definitely not easy. Interesting as hell, but damn near impossible to understand if you weren’t a genius.

I ran across campus to the building astronomy was taught in and rushed to my classroom, swinging into my seat as the second bell rang. Community colleges were run like high schools. It was kind of insulting.

Students talked to one another quietly as my professor, an old guy with missing hair, gathered his things and got ready to start the lecture. This was it. All I had to do was suffer through my astronomy final and I would be good to go until spring. I tapped my pen impatiently on my desk.

The professor glanced at me.

“Miss Kenobi, the head of the department would like to see you.”

Every set of eyes turned to me. I froze not in embarrassment, but shock. I was used to being the center of attention but I wasn't used to being called out point-blank.

“Why?” I asked stupidly. “Don't I have to take the final?”

“Yes, but Mr. Ren has a few questions for you first. Hurry along.”

Some of the people I had befriended snickered at me when I walked past them, mildly terrified. I was doing pisspoor in the class but I didn't think I was failing. Was I doing so bad the head of the department himself wanted to scream at me? Oh no, mom was gonna kill me if I got kicked out of school. She'd go on and on about how disappointed dad would've been and Rian would stand there and nod.

I walked a bit slower on my way down the hall to the astronomy department. My new sneakers squeaked on the floors but I was too busy worrying to care about that. I didn't even know who ran the whole place. I fidgeted with my pen, still grasping it like an idiot, and turned into another quiet, short hallway. There was light spilling into the hall from underneath the door. It was awfully dark.

Awkwardness wasn't really a part of my personality. I was a vivacious person; outgoing and friendly to a fault. Though I didn't participate in any of my college's official teams I involved myself in other extracurriculars and tried to be part of the group like everyone else. Blending in was the easiest way to go on a campus with 20,000 plus students.

'KYLO REN, PH.D' was emblazoned on the foggy glass of the door. It was a fancy name definitely deserving of an astronomy geek. I wanted to giggle when I thought of who I would be meeting. It was probably some old guy like my professor who played with models of the solar system all day.

The door was already slightly ajar, so I nudged it open with my foot and peered inside the office. It was completely bare, save for a cheesy motivational picture hanging behind the big desk and a computer screen that had been turned off. Huh, Dr. Ren didn't decorate much. I stepped inside and looked around curiously for any sign of the old guy so I could get our meeting over with.

“Miss Kenobi, I presume?”

In retrospect, his voice was his greatest attribute. He still had a hint of an accent from his mother that gave him soothing, methodical tone rather than a harsh American voice. It tingled down my spine and left me feeling very uncomfortable, but at that point I chalked it up to be already being nervous.

Dr. Ren was standing behind me in the doorway with a white mug clasped in one hand and he was idly leaning over it to sip the hot tea. He was fairly tall. I stared at him in shock, having expected an old man, and I thought his eyes widened ever so slightly when he looked back at me. His grasp tightened on the mug and he calmly licked his lips, smiling. Hot *damn* was he attractive. Black hair and those eyes could've been ripping right through me.

Yet his blue eyes looked tired for some reason, and the top button of his blue dress shirt was open.

He'd been in a rush getting ready to come to class just like me. My eyes traced the curve of the facial hair down the side of his face that connected in a moustache and soul-patch. It made him look older but younger at the same time. Hot *damn*.

I averted my eyes to a bookshelf that was strangely empty. "Uh, yeah, that's me."

"...Ah. I see."

Dr. Ren stepped inside his office and gestured for me to sit in the chair across from his desk, which I did with all the grace of a one-legged ostrich. He sat elegantly in his own chair and drank from his mug that was still probably boiling hot. I cocked my head slightly. It must've hurt pretty bad to do that.

He scratched his collar bone. My eyes were ripped from the ceiling and glued to his lean fingers massaging the delicate skin, accentuating his body structure. Goddammit, I was like a cat in heat! I examined my fingernails that I had bitten to the quick a few days ago. It was time to get a manicure done. Mom footed the bill because she hated having a daughter with gross nails.

There were a few clicks of the mouse and taps on the keyboard as Dr. Ren searched for what he needed to discuss with me. My heart was pounding. I was trapped in some tiny office with the head of my favorite subject, which I was also performing terribly in, and he was ignoring me.

When he reached up to hold his chin in his hand it took all my strength to not look. If he caught me staring he'd probably throw me out and fail me completely. What if he had the power to drop me out of school? Mom and Rian were gonna flip out when I got home and Kira would remind them that she was the smart one in the family. I hated my little sister. When she got out of high school—

"Rey, correct?"

I blinked and risked peeking up at Dr. Ren. He was staring at the computer with an eyebrow raised.

"Yeah," I said.

He clicked a few more times. "Your professor, Mr. Holmes, noticed a strange theme in several of your exams, and even homework. He was a bit surprised and brought them to me for review."

Too. Much. Pressure.

"I'm sorry!" I blurted, gripping the armrests of the chair. Dr. Ren glanced at me imploringly and I continued, on the verge of tears. "I really do like this space stuff but I'm really bad in school, so I'm sorry my grades are so terrible. I'm only going to make my parents happy."

Then the office fell into silence. I shrank back in my seat, shaking from my outburst and fiddled desperately with my hands. Oh no, now I looked completely insane. He didn't care about any of that. I'd learned a year ago when I first started college that professors really didn't care.

The fan spun overhead and Dr. Ren chuckled slightly, making me look up. He was eyeing me mirthfully, like he found my behavior entertaining instead of unacceptable. I swallowed hard.

"You're quite good with this... 'space stuff'," he said. He turned the computer monitor to face me and one of my old assignments was up for display. "During your brief time with relativity, you accounted for general theory with your own math rather than what Mr. Holmes taught during class."

"Oh... I'm sorry."

Dr. Ren frowned. “Sorry? Rey—” He paused and smiled wider. “May I call you Rey?”

“Sure, go for it,” I said miserably.

“Rey it is, then.” He pointed to a sequence of numbers that I vaguely remembered from late October, shaking his head. “*This* is incredible. I have pored over relativity many days and never considered using this specific equation. You are doing your own unique work and doing it right, but what your professor and I noticed is that your final answer is always utterly wrong. Why is that?”

“I don’t know,” I lied.

It was because I wasn’t the smart one in the family. Kira was.

Dr. Ren leaned his chin in his palm again, staring at my math. “Such a perfect sequence with a completely incorrect answer. I’ve seen this over the years, though not to this degree. You’re throwing the questions, aren’t you? Do you have a competitive sibling?”

Well, shit. How could he tell so easily?

“I’ve got a little sister in eleventh grade,” I said, suddenly feeling immature. “I never thought about it like that, though. I don’t really think during tests and just do what my brain tells me.”

“It’s time to set petty rivalries aside, Rey. I’ll be damned if I let this kind of talent slip through the cracks.” He x’d out the screen and turned back to me, blue eyes more alive than they had been when he first walked in. He sipped his tea. “Since this introductory class is a requirement of the astronomy program, I’m graciously offering you a second chance.”

“But... but...”

“Feigning stupidity will get you nowhere. There is no crime to be found in intelligence. If you have an interest in the field and a talent for it, I would very much like to see you succeed.”

We discussed a course of action. I would take astronomy online over winter break to make up for my mistakes and Dr. Ren would proctor the class for me. I sat stiffly in my chair the whole time with my heart beating in my ears. Me? Smart? No one had ever told me that before.

My class was long over by the time we finished talking but I didn’t need to worry about the exam. I would be taking the whole thing over again, anyway. I rose from my chair, still vastly awkward around the incredibly attractive head of the department, and he followed me into the hallway. There weren’t any classrooms around his office. It must’ve gotten pretty lonely.

He leaned on the doorframe. “Your class with me will begin December 20th. I’ll email you the details and we’ll discuss your ideas from there on out.”

“Okay,” I mumbled. “Thanks, Dr. Ren.”

“Please, call me Kylo.”

“...Thanks, Kylo.”

And his blue eyes sparkled when I walked away.

Tyger, Tyger burning bright,

Chapter Notes

~~~\*\*\*\*\*OKAY LIKE I SAID HAN AND LEIA ARE BAD PEOPLE IN THIS  
TOO\*\*\*\*\*~~~~~  
ESPECIALLY LEIA

SO

TURN BACK NOW IF THAT BOTHERS YOU  
THIS FIC WILL MAKE YOU DEEPLY UNCOMFORTABLE

The first life I had taken was small, squeaking hamster my mother had purchased for my eighth birthday. I could clearly recall lying awake at night listening to her loud, shrieking argument with my father's slurred rebuttals, all the while my new pet ran along his wheel. It grated on the hinges. My eyes grew painfully dry as the noises culminated in a cacophony of torment: my father's belt hissing from the loops, mother sobbing, the hamster's wheel *squealing*.

Squeal. How I detested that word. Even echoing in my vague and inconsistent thoughts it gyrated violently upon my nerves like a drunken prostitute, inciting my rage. *Squeal*.

*"Squeal like a pig, bitch!"*

Mother squealed and my hamster squealed, but only one was available to me. If only she had been quieter. Neither her or my new pet, Happy, would have had to die. He would have learned tricks and awed my mother in one of her rare lucid states. Perhaps my father would have watched the spectacle and replaced his beer bottle with a can of soda.

The Donator. I infrequently referred to him as a legitimate parent.

I scooped Happy from his cage and he twisted and writhed in my grasp like any other rodent. His sharp teeth sank into my finger and I stood in my quiet bedroom, squeezing the ball of fur in both of my hands with a pleased tremble. Mother screamed from the hallway, as the Donator rarely escorted her to their bedroom. Our home was small and fragile and the walls were torturously thin.

The hamster ceased movement. I replaced him in his cage and fell into a blissful slumber that night, only to be disturbed by my mother's fretting over Happy's death. Tears boiled when I needed them. I hugged her and cried like a small boy would, all the while meeting the Donator's indifferent blue eyes.

They had both destroyed me, leading to the decay of my humanity. It was a common obsession in my particular species—to select an attribute of a negligent parent that you detested and to eviscerate whatever similar creature crossed your path. Eyes were the most prevalent feature. I would tear them from their sockets and keep them for weeks to reminiscence on my sunny childhood.

Mother received her penance. Her judgment was eternal life through cursed souls, unsuspecting females who wandered too close in their curiosity. The weak, the stupid, the flippant. Prostitutes

were frequently on the receiving end of my knife. Teenagers and college students were an even tie for the coveted first place, with their cruelty and foul language and substance abuse. How I *hated* young people. I'd hated them from the moment I was born. I'd hated them when I was one of them.

A silky plume of cigarette smoke casually spilled from my mouth. I was relaxing in my hotel room's armchair, basking in the sweaty afterglow of post-coitus. A sitcom played in the background and attracted my hazy eyes away from my hastily unbuttoned jeans. Nudity made sex far too intimate. I preferred to be at least partially clothed and leave my victim exposed.

Chair legs scraped in a muffled sound across the floor as my newest victim tried to free herself. She was bound with duct tape to a kitchen chair and her mouth was shut with copious tape. Seventeen. A recent runaway from a nearby town in search of a boyfriend to free her from her normalcy. Not particularly attractive, but her eyes were the precise shade of blue I sought.

Leah screamed into the tape and I irately glanced at her over my shoulder. I'd taped her eyes open and they were beginning to dry in what I assumed was a very painful way. I took a long drag from my cigarette and her shivering eyes watched me. Her ducts had dried. She could not cry.

"You're interrupting my favorite program," I said.

I'd pinned her hair over her head to leave her neck exposed. It would make slicing her throat much easier and prevent blood from crinkling the edges. She had worked so hard to look attractive.

The girl continued to shriek even as her voice grew hoarse. I exhaled smoke in lazy circles, admiring the way they knotted together before vanishing in front of the television screen. It would take some time for her eyes to dry completely and I had a several end-of-term papers to grade. Leah's teeth would need extracting, her fingerprints would have to be burned, and I had to continue disfiguring her face. I was far too slow that evening, lounging about like a sated lion.

I rose fluidly from my chair to take one last pull from my cigarette. Leah's eyes trembled in their sockets as I approached her, flicking my ashes on the carpet until the cherry was exposed again.

"You're interrupting my favorite program," I repeated. "And now you've ruined my cigarette."

Leah's eyes rolled back in her head when I pushed the burning end of my cigarette to her cheek, twisting it in slow motions to boil away much of her skin. Her short fingers scratched desperately at the armrests of her chair but she could not react in any other way. It was rather painful. I had several experiences as the extinguisher of a lit cigarette.

However, I had one strongly preferred method of dispatching my prey.

I slid a hand into my back pocket to remove my sheathed kitchen knife, still encrusted with the blood of all the lives it had taken. I staunchly refused to wash it. My mother's essence still remained and though my compulsion to clean was overwhelming at times, her eternal deaths were far more important.

Smiling, I removed the sheath and set it gently upon the bed. "Unfortunately, I haven't much time this evening to entertain you any further. My students will be very disappointed if I haven't corrected their papers on time. I hope you understand, Leah."

The only negative aspect of stabbing was how messy I became. Quite frequently I found myself covered in blood and staring at the dead corpse, hardly capable of enjoying my favorite part of the kill. The pleasure of steel squelching through yielding flesh; the way their bodies writhed in agony

as their blood coursed through my incisions. In a safer world, I would have enjoyed licking the knife afterwards, but the types of women I lured were undoubtedly carrying vicious diseases.

I considered my curse as I tore my knife free of Leah's collapsed lung. Violence beget violence. Death beget death. As I was raised, I lived.

Across the room, my cell phone rang. I wrapped a tissue around one of my bloody hands to answer the call, leaning the device in the crux of my shoulder while I pried apart Leah's jaw. The teeth were most important to destroy. Her eyes would have to wait until I had made her body impossible to read.

"Kylo Ren speaking," I said.

"Hey, Kylo! It's Jaina."

The hind molar was particularly stubborn. I grasped Leah's lower jaw and examined the decayed tooth, weighting whether or not it was worth surgically removing. Cutting gums was gory and time-consuming. The tooth was likely too forgone to be used in dental recognition.

"Wonderful to hear from you," I replied. I took the girl's upper and lower jaw to disengage her mandibles so her mouth hung open loosely. Much better. "How is my favorite cousin feeling?"

Jaina laughed. "Well, I just gave birth so I guess as well as I can be. Will you be flying to Paris for Christmas this year? The kids are dying to see you again. They loved their telescopes you gave them last year—I have a hard time getting them to come inside on some nights. My mother and father will be there along with everyone else. There's going to be a memorial for Aunt Leia."

My mother was an immigrant who had foolishly shacked up with the first man she stumbled across. Her half of the family lived quite well in the City of Lights. Her sister and brother—my aunt and uncle—both had several children, but my cousin Jaina was particularly fond of me. I wasn't entirely sure why. My European family had welcomed my existence with open arms and frequently encouraged me to leave America behind to live with them in the lap of luxury.

Dismembering women in a large city was far more difficult than drowning their corpses in my personal swamp. I politely refused, citing the Donator's side of the family as my reason. I had met my paternal grandparents on a single occasion and they reeked of cat urine. I assumed they had died.

I sighed, feigning consternation. "Let me consider it. I have some business to take care of here."

"Oh, backed up on paperwork?"

Leah's incisor came free with a ghastly tear. I dropped it daintily into my Mason jar that was presently holding several other teeth and my extinguished cigarette.

"Something like that," I said.

"You're such a hard worker! Mom said Aunt Leia was the same way you are."

"Mhm. I'll talk to you later, Jaina. Have a nice day."

My cousin bade me farewell and I returned to my task at hand with gusto, ripping free the rest of Leah's teeth in record time. I sliced her tongue free, tenderly burned the prints from her fingers, and collected all of my evidence in the jar. I left her to wash the blood from my hands and bleached the bowl of the sink to ensure no residue would be left to uncover. My own fingerprints had been

burned off long ago.

I cut Leah free of her bonds and wrapped her in a blanket as I had done so many times before to leave her by the door while I cleaned the room. It was a guise I had created several years back and it worked quite well: thus far, it had a 100% success rate. I would leave the hotel in a rush claiming my wife was very ill and absolutely no one would question me. They would only wish us well.

And I knelt upon the floor to scrub the blood from the fibers of the carpet, intently examining each square inch for any forgotten evidence. I vacuumed the room and backtracked my work before stripping the sheets from the bed. I'd not drawn any blood from Leah until she was bound in the chair, which I had cleaned scrupulously with a toothbrush. I was a detective's worst nightmare—a psychopathic serial killer with a strong comorbidity of obsessive-compulsive disorder. I cleaned until my fingers were raw.

The front desk attendant didn't glance up from his cell phone as I walked out the door with my 'wife' slumbering in my arms, also clutching her remains. Several passerby smiled at my chivalrous gesture and I laid her in the back seat for transport with her face carefully obscured. I did not make mistakes.

Bach played his concerto in my speakers as I drove home through the cold night, lingering on the last few inhalations of a cigarette. The snow would be arriving soon enough. Washington was a stubborn state but she succumbed like all the rest. I flicked my ashes onto the wet pavement as I drove, gazing indifferently ahead. Leah's body would rest quite directly on top of Hannah's. How amusing.

A strange sight on the roadside caught my attention. An SUV had its hazard lights on full display and a small woman was standing outside furiously kicking a popped tire. As I passed her, she turned to look at my car flying by through the increasingly heavy rainstorm.

And I promptly slammed on my brakes, nearly sending my dear Leah flying out of her seat. I gripped the wheel tightly for several seconds before turning to look out of my rear window where the woman I had suspected was watching my car with intense suspicion, undoubtedly frightened by my sudden stop. Her hair was plastered to her head from the rain and it was quite dark but I could see her eyes.

I smiled at Leah. "Perhaps Miss Kenobi would appreciate a ride with us."

## Out of the night that covers me,

### Chapter Notes

ok rey's chapters are much more subdued

It had been shaping up to be a good week for once.

Mom and Rian had been ecstatic when I told them the news about Dr. Ren and how he wanted me to switch to astronomy. I'd expected them to react negatively or tell me to stick with athletics but mom leapt out of her chair in the kitchen and the next thing I knew, I was face-first in her boobs. She made me baked ziti for dinner and called grandma to tell her the good tidings. I couldn't believe her reaction—Rian and Kira were much more subdued and my little sister seemed pissed off.

To celebrate, I decided to go to a party and have just a few drinks. I was an idiot and already a terrible driver, making for a dangerous combination on the way home. It was my intention to sneak inside so mom and Rian wouldn't wake up and catch me still buzzed but my SUV had decided to die along the way, leaving me hopelessly stranded and screwed. They'd be able to smell the booze on me.

Of course it had to be raining. I walked around my car a couple of times to angrily kick the tires, stumbling back thanks to my poor motor control. Mom would give me her spiel about underage drinking and Rian would encourage her like he always did. What if Kira came along? Goddammit, she was such a pain, smirking at me and sticking out her tongue.

It was then that I noticed my blown tire in the rear and began angrily cursing at it. My tires were so expensive and I didn't have a jack stand to change it! I'd never hear the end of it.

Lights coming down the road attracted my gaze and I glanced up for a split second to watch a new-ish black sedan fly by going a solid ten miles an hour over the speed limit. I turned to watch the car fly through the rain when the driver suddenly slammed on their brakes, nearly skidding across the road to the guard rail on the other side. I blinked in surprise and stepped back when the car began to reverse toward me, swinging neatly into position in front of mine.

The rain pattered down on my head as a familiar face stepped out of the car. I rubbed my eyes to make sure I wasn't having a drunken hallucination but Kylo was still standing there clear as day with a condescending smile on his face. He leaned on the door and looked up at the sky.

"Want a ride, Miss Kenobi?" he called.

Holy shit. My very attractive and encouraging astronomy professor was standing a few feet away from me, currently being drenched in rain and offering me a ride home. I swayed on my feet and his eyes flickered down to my shoes when I staggered and leaned against my car. Either way, I was going to get screamed at by my parents. There was no victory. It was better to wait it out and call them for a ride.

"It's okay," I said. "It's probably better for me to wait and call my parents in a little while."

He cocked his head and smirked. "Oh, I see. Out for a bit of fun, hm?"

"Well... well I'm almost sober, so it's not like I was swerving everywhere!"

"Mhm." Kylo beckoned me with his lean index finger. "Come along, Rey. I can't leave you in the middle of nowhere like this. You can stay at my home until you're presentable."

The way he spoke was so formal. It fit him, though: he was supposed to be really intelligent, so I assumed he'd be one of those reserved, fancy types. Even his clothes reinforced this, what with his long black trench coat and dark jeans, paired with black boots. Not a hair was out of place.

I bit my lower lip and turned to examine my car, debating whether or not I should leave it behind. She would be fine if I locked her and came back first thing in the morning. I clicked the electric locking mechanism and hurried through the rain to Kylo's sleek black car, which upon closer inspection was a high-end Audi. It wasn't what I expected from a professor at a state-funded school.

While I adjusted myself in the front seat and admired the general grandeur of the car, Kylo hefted something heavy out of the back to put it in the trunk. I thought nothing of it and continued preening to make myself more presentable. Sure he was probably married or at least had a girlfriend but there was nothing wrong with looking good.

The trunk slammed shut and he was beside me in the next moment, shifting the car into first gear to start driving. Of course it was a manual. How else were you supposed to drive an Audi?

"Nice car," I said stupidly.

The car climbed through the gears with a low growl. "This is a dangerous road for a woman to travel down alone. You should be more careful."

I fiddled with my fingers. I'd left my phone in the car.

"Yeah, I know."

"You seem uncomfortable. I can bring you straight home, if you'd like."

"No, no, I'm fine!" I exclaimed. "I'm just still kind of buzzed so I don't want to talk too much and stutter like a moron. And this is kind of embarrassing because you're my professor and everything."

He laughed and my heart skipped a beat.

"Don't tell me I look that old."

"Of course not! I'm only saying that because... because..." I groaned in defeat and slouched in my seat, shaking my head. "This is why I didn't want to talk."

"But this is such a scintillating conversation," Kylo said. He glanced at me while the car began to slow down. "Liquor has a convenient ability to loosen any person's tongue. It's more pertinent for me to elicit as much information from you as possible right now rather than wait until the alcohol has ebbed away."

"I am way too drunk for you to use words like that."

Kylo only smiled.



Gravel crunched under the Audi's tires as we crawled along a short driveway toward a tall and foreboding home set against the famous woods of Washington. I pushed myself up in my seat and stared at the moderately-sized house that was layered with cedar shingles that made it look a bit like a beach house. Kylo parked just outside the garage and slipped out of the car. Oh god, he *had* to be married. His wife would probably flip out when she saw me.

My door opened and a polite hand was extended to me, which I graciously took to pull myself out of the car. I wavered upon standing and nearly collapsed back in the Audi but Kylo deftly caught me with reflexes that I had never seen before. He gently wrapped my arm around the back of his neck to help me walk toward the house and I groggily became aware of how drunk I really was.

It was quiet and dark inside. Kylo flipped a light switch and I was immediately faced with a set of stairs ascending to a dark second floor, along with a comfortably decorated living room. Through the living room, I could see the outline of a kitchen with pots and pans. To my right was another doorway leading to a formal dining room but I couldn't make out the details.

My astronomy professor, who I had gone from hardly knowing to accepting rides from in the course of a week, carefully set me down on the black couch. The guy was really a big fan of the color black. It fit him, though. Kylo Ren, astronomy genius—bright colors would make him seem geeky.

"I'll be back in a few minutes," he said, glancing at a watch on his wrist. "I need to deal with the business in my trunk. Feel free to help yourself to a beverage in the kitchen, but try not to vomit."

Then he was gone in an instant and I was left alone in his quiet, empty home.

I closed my eyes and took deep breaths to hold down my puke, keenly aware that he would not be happy with me if I barfed on his very fancy black couch. A clock ticked by in the kitchen. I was tempted to explore but the alcohol was making it tough to do much of anything. Would I even be able to go home? I didn't want to impose on Kylo any more than I already had and I didn't want to make things awkward or step over a boundary.

Dr. Ren was thusfar a very friendly and genuine man. He was kind of weird and reclusive but I'd learned a long time ago that it was kind of the burden a genius carried. If my being in his house complicated that, I would risk my mother's hellfire to go back where I belonged.

I rolled over on my side and curled into a ball as the alcohol began to recede in painful pulls, leaving behind a headache and sore stomach. God, that was all contingent upon whether or not I could roll myself off the couch and back to his Audi. I hiccupped and covered my mouth as the front door opened, letting in a relieving cold breeze. My nausea recoiled just a bit.

His boots moved casually across the floor until he was standing beside me. I risked a peek to see his head was tilted and both of his blue eyes were studying my face. Did I look that bad?!

"I'm sorry," I blurted. "I'm sure your wife or girlfriend will be home soon so—"

"I don't have either of those, but thank you for your tact. You look quite sick, Rey."

I tried to prop myself up. "I'm f-fine. We can go now if you w..." My belly jolted abruptly and I desperately grabbed a nearby pillow to hug it, grimacing.

"Don't fret; I have a second bedroom. Regardless, I wouldn't make a woman sleep on the couch."

"No, really, I don't want to intrude. I can leave in a few minutes, I swear."

“Mhm.” Kylo looked away from me unwillingly and his cold blue eyes moved to the kitchen. “I’ll bring you a bit of ginger ale and bread to help your stomach. Would you like something different to wear to bed? My clothes will be big on you, but you’ll be more comfortable.” He smiled fondly. “Teenagers and their restrictive blue jeans.”

Due to being rendered utterly speechless, Kylo took my silence as an agreement. He left me gawking at the fake fireplace across the living room that was flickering with a flame. He... he was going to let me wear his clothes to bed?! Since when was that okay? I got a distinct feeling we were crossing a professional boundary and I got an even stronger feeling that I needed to leave.

But my girlishness won me over. One night wouldn’t hurt anything. He was just being helpful to a young person in need, like a father or something. It wasn’t like he had any other intentions—I could tell he wasn’t that type of guy. I settled down comfortably and closed my eyes while I waited for him to return with the stomach-soothing bread and ginger ale. What a nice man.

When I opened my eyes there was a bowl full of cut-up pieces of Italian bread and a wine glass filled with ginger ale. The half-empty bottle of soda was sitting beside it. I yawned and reached for the bread to realize a red blanket had been draped across me while I was sleeping. Had I been out for long? I chewed thoughtfully on a piece of bread to find it wasn’t stale. Nope, only a few minutes.

“I’m afraid there’s nothing I can do if you slip into a coma.”

I looked over the back of the couch to see Kylo standing at the foot of the stairs now wearing a pair of dark grey pajamas and holding something red in his arms. He smiled at me and I laughed at his joke, surprisingly at ease. I should’ve been more wary of him but I figured he was harmless.

Attractive men never really raised alarms. They could do no wrong.

“You must be really impressed with my brains now,” I said, sitting up as he approached.

Kylo sat down at my feet. “No, but the thought processes of young people never cease to amaze me.” He offered me the red object and gestured flippantly at the ceiling. “This is an old article that belonged to my sister when she would stay on weekends. You two are roughly the same size.”

“Thank you,” I said. I hesitated, then: “If you don’t mind my asking, does your family live around here?”

“My mother was from France, and—” He stopped very suddenly. “Well, perhaps that’s a story for another day.”

I leaned forward, hugging the nightgown to my chest. “Really?! That’s so cool!”

“...Yes, I suppose. Are you ready for bed? I’d like to set you up in the spare bedroom before you pass out on the couch again.”

Oops, I must’ve overstepped a boundary that time. I shut my mouth immediately and nodded, hopping to my feet nimbly only to have my stomach protest furiously. Kylo gathered the ginger ale and bread to lead me upstairs and I worried I had seriously affronted him. That was really rude of me.

The bedroom was very plain. The walls were painted a soft shade of brown and the sheets were eggshell white, giving it a hotel vibe. There was a very colorful painting hung on the wall opposite the door and a television resting on an armoire at the other side of the room. Kylo set my snacks on the nightstand beside the bed and pulled back the sheets while I looked around.

“There’s a bathroom right across the hall,” he said. “The other is downstairs, but I doubt you’ll be wandering much tonight.”

I fingered the red gown. “I didn’t mean to be rude. I’m sorry.”

Kylo straightened. His expression was unreadable.

“You apologize quite a bit, Miss Kenobi.”

“Yeah, it’s a bad habit.”

“Hardly. Polite women are... quite rare nowadays.” He put his hands on his hips, still a total enigma. “Is there anything else you’ll need? A paper bag to aspirate into?”

I shook my head quickly. “No, I’m fine, thanks. I really appreciate all the help. I can’t think of many people who would outright help a stranger like that.”

“Polite *and* grateful,” he murmured. “Your parents raised you well. I have no problem helping a fellow astronomer. A mind is a terrible thing to waste, after all. I’d like to see you succeed.”

Kylo wished me a good night and left. I changed into the red nightgown he had given me and was surprised to see just how well it fit. The edges were kind of frayed like it had been worn a lot but I didn’t mind. He was being too generous for me to complain about a damn thing.

Dr. Ren was such a nice guy.

## Black as the pit from pole to pole,

### Chapter Notes

nothing's wrong.....

The sound of a sitcom woke me the next morning to a pounding headache. I groaned softly, nestling closer to the warm sheets and squeezing my eyes shut. Last night was a painful blur. All I remembered was getting drunk at some party and trying to drive home regardless. My tire popped and I was stranded on the side of the road until a car came up and a guy offered me a ride. It had been raining and I was already soaked to the bone so I gratefully accepted his offer.

I blearily looked at the nightstand to see my snack from the previous night had been replaced with plain toast that wasn't burned in the least. There was a glass of water beside it, probably to keep my stomach from getting upset again. I rolled over on my side and nibbled the toast carefully to keep from spilling any crumbs on the nice, clean floor. It was rude to leave a mess behind.

After I had eaten what I could I gingerly stepped out of bed into the cold morning to make my way to the bathroom. The sitcom was fairly loud and drowned out the sound of me walking around. I stepped inside the meticulously clean and organized bathroom to see a note taped neatly to the mirror over the sink. I squinted at it, trying to read the graceful script with hazy, unfocused eyes.

*Miss Kenobi,*

*Feel free to help yourself to a shower. There are spare toothbrushes in the cabinets. I may not be available when you wake.*

*-Kylo*

It was a much-appreciated gesture. I locked the bathroom door and slipped out of the nightgown to hop in his shower, feeling very much like a mooch but desperate to be clean. When I was done I opened one of the many toothbrushes in the cabinet and scrubbed the taste of alcohol away. I put the nightgown back on because my clothes were way too wet to wear either way.

I walked quietly down the stairs to investigate the house and was surprised to see Kylo sitting on the couch with one arm slung carelessly across the back. My eyes flickered to the television: *Seinfeld* didn't seem like the type of a show a genius would watch. He was fully dressed in black pants and a blue dress shirt like he had some important business meeting to go to. I lingered at the foot of the stairs and watched him, trying to decide what to say.

"Feeling better this morning, Miss Kenobi?" he drawled without looking back at me.

"Um... yes, thank you. I'm sorry. This is so embarrassing."

Kylo sipped a glass of orange juice, riveted on the TV. "No matter. Have you seen this program? It isn't my favorite, but I suppose it's better than nothing."

I hesitantly approached him and stood beside the couch to watch the show for a few seconds. Comedy was my favorite. I loved to laugh so mindless sitcoms were great.

Kylo moved over to allow me to sit beside him and glanced at me from the corner of his eye, only mildly interested in what I was doing. But his gaze suddenly sharpened and he turned his azure eyes to me, examining my wet hair with intense interest. I tugged on the ends of my locks and he took another calm sip from his orange juice before turning his eyes back to the television. Weird.

“I can leave whenever you want,” I said timidly.

“You’re right, you can. I had your car towed and replaced the tire.”

“You... what?!” My eyes widened and my pulse quickened. That was expensive! “Let me pay you back somehow. I work at Luna’s Pharmacy in town and I can probably—”

He waved me off kind of irately. “Don’t insult me, Rey.”

We watched the show for a while. I would smile and giggle a bit at the proper parts but I noticed Kylo’s expression never changed, remaining harsh and critical the entire time. If he was so deathly serious, what was he doing watching funny TV shows? National Geographic seemed more up his alley.

The show ended. Kylo rose from the couch and fiddled around in the kitchen for a while before reemerging, carrying two glasses of orange juice and a notebook under his arm. He sat beside me again and offered me a glass of OJ, which I drank very slowly to save my poor stomach. He flipped open the notebook to reveal a bunch of numbers and Greek symbols. High-end calculus; oi vei.

I wrung my hands nervously. Normally I was good at making conversation, but Kylo was pretty goddamn intimidating. He was much older than me and clearly five hundred times smart, and he even had my car fixed. How on Earth could I repay him for that?

“What is the equation for Kepler’s 3<sup>rd</sup> Law?” Kylo asked suddenly.

I didn’t even have to think. “It defines orbital motion. The relationship among mass, period, and distance of separation in au’s. Open parenthesis, ‘MA’ plus ‘MB’ close parenthesis equals ‘a’ cubed divided by ‘p’ squared.”

“Wein’s Law.”

“The maximum peak in angstroms output of radiation from an emitting object to its temperature in Kelvin. The max peak of angstroms equals 2.9 times ten raised to the seventh power divided by ‘T’, or the temperature in Kelvin.”

He smiled slightly. “You sound like a textbook, Rey. What are the three most important ways an astronomer defines luminosity?”

“The Distance Modulus, Inverse Square Law, and Tully-Fisher Relation. And before you ask me to spit out the equations, I can write them down on paper for you.”

“I would very much like it if you did that for me.”

I’d gone from being uncomfortable and desperate to leave to hastily scribbling down the formulas rotating in my head for Dr. Ren. His sharp eyes watched my hand fly across the paper like he was waiting for me to make a mistake but I never did. I could recite them in my sleep. Hell, I could probably solve the damn things in my sleep. It just... clicked.

Kylo accepted the notebook back when I was done, puckering his lips.

“I see you write the Stephen-Boltzmann Law in its simpler form. Any particular reason?”

“It lets me express stellar properties in term of solar properties.”

“Fair enough. I noticed you hesitated while writing expansion formulas.” He looked up at me, idly chewing the end of the pen. “Hubble’s Law is very important, as is the Doppler Effect. Perhaps we should begin there and I should move you to a more advanced astronomy class.”

I blinked. “Wait, we’re starting *now*?! I’m barely dressed!”

“I’m only giving you a basic quiz, which you’ve passed with flying colors. I intended to instruct the course online but perhaps it would be easier for us to meet in person, considering how close you live. It would be far more constructive to your learning if we could review principles and laws on paper rather than dealing with the inefficiencies of the internet. What do you think?”

My chest felt tighter and tighter the longer Kylo’s indifferent cold eyes studied me. Us? Alone in this house? I didn’t know if our college would allow that sort of thing. It was kind of a relief that there was no woman around to get jealous or ask questions but strange at the same time.

Dr. Ren wasn’t tough on the eyes—not at all—and he was under 30. I wondered why he didn’t even have a girlfriend. Sciencey types could be withdrawn but he seemed polite and very well-spoken. Hell, he gave me ginger ale and orange juice in a crystal wine glass. I could name about ten girls who would be tripping over themselves to get someone like him.

“Are you sure that’s okay?” I asked. “I don’t want either of us to get in trouble.”

“They won’t be giving either of us any trouble.” Kylo tapped the pen to his thin lips, scrutinizing my formulas with a trained eye. “I write the grant requests for each science and math department. They try to allow me to do whatever I please so I keep the cash flowing.”

“Oh,” I faltered.

“Don’t worry, Rey. My intentions are pure.”

I jerked back like I’d been stung and shook my head furiously, turning red. “I’m not worried about that kind of thing! I know you wouldn’t do something like that.”

He cocked his head. “Or would I?”

It didn’t feel threatening. It was more of an existential prod to get me to consider different possibilities, not an actual suggestion that he would cross that boundary. Regardless, I began to feel very uncomfortable wearing the red nightgown he had given me.

“Well, I guess I can’t know for sure,” I admitted, “but you’re my professor and you work for the college so I assume you wouldn’t. And you don’t seem like that kind of person.”

“Why not? I live alone on the fringes of a city in a large, sparsely decorated home with no animals. I am not and have no intentions of being married. I have a notebook brimming with mathematical scribbles. Why wouldn’t you jump to the conclusion that I am a violently sick man perhaps luring young women to his home such as yourself? Are you positive I’ve actually repaired your car, or was it a trick to lull you into a sense of security? Perhaps there is no car. You could be trapped.”

My spine prickled. That was all definitely true, but probably false. The pretty face I saw sitting a couple of feet away from me didn’t scream “psychopath,” so I trusted my gut feeling.

“You’re not gonna make this very easy, are you?” I asked sourly.

“Of course not. I’m here to, as they say, ‘drive you up the wall.’”

“Terrific.” I stood up, stretching my arms toward the ceiling. “It’s probably about time for me to go home before my mother starts calling the police.”

“Indeed. We will meet Tuesday and Friday evenings from six to nine o’clock. I hope you have a safe trip, Miss Kenobi.”

“Yeah... thanks for everything. I’ll pay you back, even if you don’t want me to.”

And once again, Dr. Ren only smiled at me.

My SUV was waiting outside as promised and both my keys and clothes were resting in the passenger seat. I looked over my shoulder at Kylo’s house again, excited and nervous about what was soon to come. We were starting the following week and I got to actually see things instead of having to sit in front of a computer screen the whole time. I started up my car and typed my address in my GPS Rian had given me last Christmas, then headed home.

Mom was sitting at the kitchen table holding her head when I walked inside. She leapt out of her chair like she had when I told her I was apparently a blooming genius and hugged me for a really long time. Rian was at work and Kira had stayed over at a friend’s, so it was just me and mom. I apologized to her a hundred times and explained I had just passed out at Rose’s house.

Rose agreed to cover for me but she wasn’t happy that I wouldn’t tell her what really happened. I was still on the fence about everything with Kylo and wanted to keep it a secret for as long as possible. Mom would be awfully suspicious of him and she wouldn’t understand that he wasn’t that type of guy. After I had passed the class and moved on to the spring semester I would tell all of them.

While I was changing into new clothes in my bedroom, my charging cell phone vibrated. I tugged my t-shirt over my head and unlocked the screen, expecting a text from Rose or my friend Luke, who’s house I had gotten ludicrously drunk at the night before. My stomach flipped.

*Hello, Rey. This is Dr. Ren. I found your cell phone number in your information logged in the school’s database. Please don’t forget to bring back the nightgown—I wouldn’t want you to have nothing to sleep in the next time I find you stranded on the side of the road. ;)*

Oh. My. God.

The phone trembled in my hands as I stared blankly at Kylo’s text message. He wrote with perfect grammar, and... was he insinuating something? No, I was overthinking it. I typed back a haphazard reply and finished getting dressed, trying to stay calm.

*so sorry! i didn’t even realize it! i’ll bring it back on tuesday.*

Rose picked me up for dinner and started berating me about my poor life choices. I was staring at the next text Kylo had sent me, disbelieving.

*I don’t mind. It looked quite good on you. I’ll see you Tuesday evening.*

Well, shit.

# In the forests of the night

## Chapter Notes

kylo chapter again so you've been warned

*"I'm sorry."*

*"I'm so sorry, Dr. Ren!"*

*"I'm so, so sorry."*

My seldom used cell phone was lying on my kitchen table before me, silent and unmoving for the past incalculable hours. I had burned through half a pack of cigarettes in the mean time in a vain attempt to control my overpowering, violent urges. Apologies, apologies. I loved apologies. If Rey apologized to me once more, I promised my clawing demon he would feast on her that evening.

Yet my new protégée failed to respond. Years of practice in the art of patience had kept me firmly rooted to my seat anticipating at least one more message, but she was silent. I drew harsh, painful pulls from my cigarettes while I waited with both eyes riveted on the phone. Answer. Give me an excuse to eviscerate you, Rey. I needed a valid reason for destroying a fellow genius. Such people could not be lightly slain like the usual sheep.

My fingers undulated on the table in series of clicks. It had been quite a while since I was last fixated upon a female and my little Rey was quickly becoming my newest obsession. I was prone to those tendencies: not attached, because I lacked the capacity for such nonsense, but irrevocably *obsessed*.

However, I would be patient as always and keep my wits about me. There were too many factors about Miss Kenobi in flux to consider her worthy quite yet. Several weeks of observing her mathematics at work would tell me what I needed to know. If she failed, she would die like the others.

I twisted my neck. She was young. Aggressive advances would frighten her away, even if my instinct screamed the opposite. Her rather submissive personality was a boon that would make keeping her lips sealed much easier. Regardless, Rey was wary of me, and I was mildly concerned she would spill her secrets to one of her friends. I'd witnessed her paling around with Rose Tico several times.

Ah, the way she recited Wein's Law; it was truly music to my ears. Her inflection was short and crisp like a textbook, lacking the typical stutters and stumbles most students suffered. If I wasn't a violent, unrepentant sadist I may have been able to achieve sexual gratification listening to her idly twist complicated formulas around in her mouth as if they were nothing.

If I was ever to have an equal, it would be Rey Kenobi.

The phone began to ring. I paused in the middle of my tenth cigarette to glance at it and was slightly disappointed to see the name on the screen. My irksome therapist was calling again.

I answered it, dashing my ashes into a tray. "Dr. Kylo Ren speaking."



“You missed your session again, Mr. Ren. Any particular reason why?”

“Psychoanalyzing me over the phone, Dr. Skywalker?”

“Of course not,” he said, “but inquiring minds like to know. Your sessions are no longer court-ordered but I do like to know you’re doing well, Kylo.”

Both of my parents had died on the same day. The Donator attacked mother in a particularly angry rage and removed her head with an axe. I was sixteen years old at the time, blossoming into a gruesome psychopath, and had done the right thing: bludgeoned him with a frying pan. It had been cited as self-defense and I had avoided prison for the time being with monthly psychiatric visits. Dr. Luke Skywalker oversaw my ‘recovery’ for a very long five years.

Seven more had passed and I continued to visit Dr. Skywalker to keep my appearances clean. I was a cautious killer and kept my record far from derelict. I looked like a model citizen.

I smiled into my cigarette. “I’m quite well, Luke. As a matter of fact, I had a very amiable woman visit my home this evening. It was to discuss astronomical concepts, of course.”

Luke was quiet for several heartbeats. I dearly loved to confuse him.

“Did you?” he asked coolly. “Interesting. I recall you expressing distaste for women.”

“The only facet of a woman I hold any amount of disdain for is her ghastly emotions.” I crushed my cigarette in the tray, growing hungrier by the second. “Their voices are a bit of a bother as well. I’m not sure how married men tolerate that incessant, piercing shriek that is the hallmark of femininity.”

He laughed. “You have such a way with words. I expect a visit tomorrow.”

“Of course. Have a nice evening, Luke.”

The desire to kill was strangling me. I needed a substitute for Rey—a woman I could torment until my needs were abated for at least one more evening. It would be a slow and torturous process waiting for the opportune moment to pounce, but my obsession had already begun. I could not change course.

Irritated, I dressed well enough to appeal to easily attainable women and left my home to prowl through the city in the darker corners, where I would perhaps stumble upon an unwitting teenager. I massaged my chin impatiently while I drove and my eyes continually flickered to my cell phone resting on the passenger seat. If Rey was a bit drunk, I could certainly take advantage of her.

I parked on a favorite corner of mine and watched the vagrants stumble about in the shadows. My hunger was peaking. Whatever woman I found would rue the day she was born.

The police would send out decoys on occasion to flush men out such as myself. I had grown adept at selecting them from the others: there was always a certain kind of fear in their eyes because they knew their lives were at risk. Only the deplorable type I sought would lack that glitter of life.

A tall woman in a long, brown trench coat caught my attention. She had brown hair, which I wasn’t particularly fond of, but her blue eyes traveled with interest across the hood of my car. It was too dangerous to emerge and speak with her so I rolled down my passenger window as she approached, glancing carelessly out my own window into the night.

She leaned on the frame. “What’s a nice car like this doing in the bad part of town?”

“Get in if you’d like to find out,” I said.

The Audi did a spectacular job luring them. Most women complied without complaint and this one was no different. Amy slid into the passenger seat, politely handing me my phone in the process, and squinted at me when I began to drive. The only issue with bringing my vehicle was that the prostitutes could band together and brand me as the one responsible for the deaths of their coworkers. If I began to suspect they were considering this, I would abandon the car and walk about instead.

She attempted to begin a conversation along the way and I pointedly ignored her. I had no time for her nonsense meant to lull me into a fantastical realm in which she cared for me. It was their favorite tool—a sure-fire way to earn extra money at the end of the night with an empathetic and caring man.

The hotel clerk was once again observing his cell phone very closely. Amy stood by my side and smiled when I introduced her as my wife, and as usual I offered him cash rather than using a card. He returned to his social media while I escorted Amy up the elevator to room 22B at the end of the hall.

It was the same dilapidated garbage pile as always. I locked the door behind us and removed my jacket, offering the same gesture to Amy. She was surprised by this; they all were. Many men were unaccustomed to frequent visits with prostitutes and forsook basic chivalry, like hanging coats or confidently requesting a room. They didn’t want to feel as dirty as they were.

I could not empathize with people, but I could certainly read them.

“So, what do you want?” Amy asked. She held up her hand that glittered with various rings. “I don’t do anything involving kids or animals, though.”

“Well, that’s quite disappointing. I was dearly hoping to involve an animal this evening.”

“...No way.”

I tilted my head. I loved to torment them. “Are you sure? I could pay you extra.”

Amy’s mouth pressed into a thin line at the prospect of receiving money in exchange for committing lewd acts with a small animal. I considered it for a brief moment. It would be her last memory. But there wasn’t time for those frivolities. My homicidal urges were intensifying and I was desperate for release.

The most important step was keeping her quiet. I leaned back on my heels to remove duct tape from the bag I had brought along that carried my cleaning supplies and other loose ends. Amy’s eyes narrowed fractionally at the sight of it but she rolled her eyes and consented when I peeled off a thick piece. Several of them would outright refuse. I had to be a bit more... encouraging in those cases.

This one was roughly my age but still relatively inexperienced. She obediently sat on the bed when I approached her and reached out to pull my shirt off. My insides seized uncomfortably and I slapped her hard across the cheek, causing her to reel back in shock. I knelt between her legs on the bed and it creaked beneath the added weight. Amy’s eyes widened when I grasped her jaw tightly.

“Do not touch me,” I hissed.

To ensure she would obey me, I duct taped her wrists together as well. Amy watched me remove her dress to reveal her rather unappealing body underneath. Sex was not the most important aspect

of a woman to me—the sexual release was vital, but I had found gratification solely through stabbing on several occasions. My momentary freedom from my urges was contingent upon stabbing.

Another odd quirk of mine was my avoidance of kissing. The exchange of genetic material wasn't the crux of the problem, but the intimacy repulsed me. I tried to remain aloof throughout the process. I did not attach to my victims in the way many of my kind did. They were cattle to sate my appetite.

Amy shivered underneath me in anticipation as I unbuckled my belt. Her long legs wrapped around my waist when I leaned forward and applied a condom. It was a common misconception that stabbing was a substitute for intercourse—that men like myself were impotent. I was certainly not. I had acquired the same raw, aggressive lust as my Donator before me.

Soon she was lying on her stomach with her face hidden amongst the pillows, panting heavily into the tape and struggling to breathe. My thrusts were fast and deep; the ultimate goal was release, not enjoying each passing second. I grasped her hair to force her head deeper into the sheets to stifle her loud breathing and soon her entire body was wriggling to escape and breathe again. I pulled on her hair until it split from the scalp and she shrieked into the tape.

That *squealing* sound again. It was enough to drive me mad.

My hand slipped to the back of Amy's neck to hold her in place. I was on the brink. It was time to finish our night and return home to rest. I reached into my back pocket to remove my knife while she slowly drew herself along my length, trying to entice me to continue. I was her last customer.

I pulled the sheath from the knife with my teeth and dropped it behind us on the bed, wielding the blade in the low light of the motel. I'd been so frenzied I had forgotten to turn on my sitcom. I turned the knife in my grasp, holding it at the best angle to begin the first of many stabs.

Across the room, my cell phone began to ring with a pleasant tune.

Amy stopped completely, quite used to wives calling when husbands were in the midst of fucking her. I kept her firmly pressed to the bed and managed to reach my cell phone on the nightstand as the call ended and went to voicemail. I held it to my ear and returned to thrusting violently into Amy with the knife casually pressing to her hip. She didn't seem to notice.

*"Hi, Kyo!"* trilled Rey on the message. *"Sorry I called so late, but I wanted to let you know I can pay you back. One of my friends owed me so she paid up tonight. I'm really sorry; I know you didn't want me to but I have to. It's my parents' fault."* Her voice weakened and became meek. *"I'm really, really sorry, Dr. Ren. Um... anyway, I guess I'll see you Tuesday. Bye."*

*"Sorry..."*

*"I'm really sorry."*

*"I'm really, really sorry."*

Amy's hair tangled irrevocably in my fingers as I finished very suddenly, grinding against her with each pulse of completion to the image of Rey wet and wearing red on my couch. I leaned across her languid body for a moment, panting as my ecstasy receded and the painful longing was left behind. My obsession was intensifying. I would lose control of myself.

I removed the condom and placed it delicately in my Mason jar before turning Amy over to face me. Her body was flushed pink and her eyes bugged when they fell upon the knife in my hand. I

held her hips firmly between my knees and raised the blade high.

“Squeal like a pig, bitch.”

# **I thank whatever gods may be**

## Chapter Notes

eh let's add poe

Rose was lying across my bed with her short legs swinging carelessly in the air, flipping through a magazine. I lowered the phone from my ear after leaving a message for Dr. Ren and nervously clicked my front screen shut. No big deal. It was pushing eleven, so he was probably asleep. I'd bothered him for almost the whole day and he needed a break from it.

I turned to my best friend, smiling broadly. "So, what's on the agenda for tonight? We going to a party or something? WalMart run? I could go shopping if you're up for it."

Rose turned the page of her magazine. Her black hair was spilling over the edge of my bed and she was smacking her gum obnoxiously.

"You're antsier than usual tonight," she said. "Something wrong with your professor?"

My eyes roamed to my cell phone that was now sitting on my nightstand. I hadn't texted Kylo back after his last message because I didn't know what the hell I was supposed to say. It was just a polite way to the end the conversation so we both weren't forced into talking about nothing.

"No," I lied. "Everything's fine."

We shared clothes from my closet to get ready for a night out. Mom and Rian were already fast asleep and Kira was too busy throwing a hissy fit over the recent revelation of how smart I was. I was so glad I got to shove it in her bratty face that I wasn't the loser daughter. I was worth something—Kylo assured me of that multiple times, and he even texted me a compliment.

It was kind of exciting. I didn't know why I was suddenly all aflutter over some guy I had just met but Kylo had me; hook, line, and sinker. I turned in front of the mirror to admire my reflection in the short red dress Rose had thrown at me while we got ready. He liked red. Was it wrong to send him a picture if I looked decent? I wasn't going to send anything dirty, but maybe...

No. I needed to get a hold of myself. It was immature and unprofessional to look at him that way and I would make him uncomfortable if he found out. I needed to find someone closer to my age at a party instead of holding out for 'the one.' What a load of shit. There was no guy who spelled an endgame. Dating was all about being too choosy and not being able to settle for a person's flaws. I would be lucky if I could find someone who I could tolerate and would tolerate me in return.

Life wasn't a fairy tale, after all. People died. People left.

I slipped my cell phone in my front pocket and followed Rose quietly through the house to the front door, which squeaked when we opened it. She made rude gestures towards it but we managed to slip out without being noticed and hurried to my SUV that had a brand new tire thanks to Kylo.

My face soured while I drove and Rose chattered about a new guy she had met. I needed to stop thinking about him. It was getting sort of creepy.

Our current party was once again at Poe's house and the music was so loud I could hear it from the other side of the street. Poe's parents were usually away on business and they had a lot of money, so he was always hosting get-togethers and whatnot. Everyone was invited and he never turned someone away because of their social status or anything. Poe was a genuinely nice guy, just like—

"Shit," I muttered as Rose and I walked to the door.

She turned to raise an eyebrow at me, gorgeous as ever in a blue dress.

"Are you sure you're ok?" she asked.

"Yeah," I said, grimacing. "I just can't control my own stupid thoughts for some reason."

The door flew open and there was a flash of green before I was hoisted off the ground and throw over Poe's shoulder, shrieking in surprise. Rose laughed and slapped my ass as he carried me inside to a very thick group of teenagers who were all dancing in a claustrophobic group. I pounded my fists on Poe's back until he set me down and was promptly shoved against him.

Poe was tall and muscular with curly black hair. He had brown eyes that were always happy and bright—it was hard to catch him in a bad mood. He laughed when I scrambled to get away from him and ruffled my hair. I felt my cheeks flush. I'd also had a crush on Poe since elementary school when he gave me his milk for lunch because I'd forgotten money for mine.

He offered me a Heineken. "For you, Reybee."

He was also the only person in the world I allowed to call me "Reybee."

"Poe?! Poe, where are you?!"

And he was also dating the captain of our college's volleyball team.

I clutched my beer bottle as Miranda came into view, wearing her uniform from whatever game she has recently attended. She was beautiful, of course: she had long, curly blonde hair and the same passionate brown eyes as Poe. She hugged him tightly around the neck and Poe stumbled a bit.

"Hey, baby," he said, kissing her chastely on the lips. "I thought you were busy tonight?"

"I can always make time for you, sweetie." Miranda turned slightly to acknowledge me with a nod and a small smile. There was no bad blood between us, but I had a hard time suppressing my jealousy.

"Well Rey and I are gonna go mingle," Rose said quickly. "See you around, Poe. Miranda."

My best friend grabbed my hand and led me away from them toward the center of the writhing crowd and I morosely nursed my beer. It was pure torture sometimes. I wanted to convince myself he didn't mean anything to me, and I didn't want to ruin our friendship but... dammit, I knew I was good for him. He was smart, I was smart. He liked being outside, I liked being outside. He hated turkey, I hated turkey. Why did there always have to be a tall, attractive girl in the way?

Life really wasn't a fairy tale. There were good parts, like friends and parties and shopping, but sometimes it felt like the bad outweighed the good. I'd followed that ideology since the night I lost my father in a freak accident. He'd been in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Rose started dancing with me and I gradually drank the memories away until I was laughing and dancing with whoever came my way. Word had spread around campus that Rey Kenobi was a

closeted genius and surprisingly, it didn't kill my blooming social career. More guys were interested when they figured out I was more than an outdoorsy type and I hoped one of them would make me forget about both Poe and Kylo.

I paused in the middle of dancing with a new guy, swaying on my feet. *Dammit!* Why couldn't I control myself?! The guy caught me when I almost fell over and I was passed off into another pair of arms that dragged me out of the crowd. I realized I was covered in sweat.

It was Poe. He told me something about lying down and I squinted at him through the strobe lights, trying to read the sentence off his lips. His house was huge. I'd run through it all the time when I was a kid and we played tag together, and I'd sat in his closet when we were ten and he wanted to play doctor. I wished life would slow down. Why did it have to be so damn hard?

My phone started vibrating in my back pocket as I stared at Poe. He watched me struggle to take it out and fumble with the unlock function until I finally managed to swipe the screen.

"Reybee Nekobi speaking," I slurred.

"Will I be rescuing you from the roadside again tonight, Miss Kenobi?"

My mouth ran dry. I really needed to drink some water. Or remember to breathe.

Poe stepped closer when he noticed my expression blanch. "Are you okay, Rey? Who are you talking to? Hang up the phone right now."

I hastily backed away from my friend and hurried to the bathroom, promptly shutting and locking the door behind me before he could follow. No one could know I was talking to Kylo yet. Right? I didn't know why, but I knew I had to hide it from all of them.

I slumped against the door and sank to the floor, cradling my phone close to my ear. "Sorry, I just had to get out of the crowd. So I uh... I have money to pay you back now."

"We'll address that in a moment. Who was that speaking to you?"

"My friend. It's no biggie, he's a good guy. You won't find me on a roadside or anythin' tonight, promise."

"Give me his name," Kylo said in a menacing way.

"Uh... Poe Dameron. Why do you need it?"

"Cataloguing purposes." A keyboard clicked in the background, distinct even over the blaring music outside the bathroom. "Shall I come pick you up or wait for your inevitable phone call?"

I scowled. "That was an accident! You're getting real snarky with me, Dr. Ren."

"Only because you've caught my attention, Miss Nekobi."

My brain took a few lagging seconds to process his disguised joke. I folded my arms and pouted my lower lip, sitting alone in the bathroom and dealing with my swimming vision. I was really, *really* drunk. In fact, I was drunk enough to risk flirting with the professor I had met a few days ago.

"Must've been the nightgown you gave me," I said.

"More than likely," Kylo responded without missing a beat. "Speaking of which, I'm missing that

article of clothing quite a bit. Perhaps I can bring you home this evening and you can return it to me a few days ahead of time. You would have my sincerest gratitude.”

I couldn’t process the message he’d wound into his words. I rubbed my head, struggling to comprehend as someone banged on the door. Was I even supposed to be talking to him? It was sort of about school but mostly about me sleeping over at his house the night before. Christ, what was I doing? Was the smart girl in me coming out and making me go crazy?

“Rey?” called Poe. “Are you sick?”

“I’m fine!” I said a little too loudly.

“Your friend?” Kylo asked.

It was really loud in the house and my brain was moving slower and slower. I nodded as if he could see me and remembered to make an agreeing noise.

“It’s probably not a good idea for you to come here,” I said. A moment of lucidity had struck me. “Poe goes to the same school and I don’t want anyone getting ideas that we’re... y’know, doing anything against the rules. You know how dumb people can be.”

And before I could hear Kylo’s reply, my phone went dead.

I pulled it away from my ear and groaned in frustration as Poe finally managed to pry open the door and step inside the bathroom. He reached down to help me to my feet and asked me a couple of things: who I was talking to, how I was feeling, whether or not I was ready to pass out. I was kind of annoyed with his sudden protectiveness—he usually let me wander around all night alone.

Rose was occupied with her mouth glued to some guy’s. She was leaving for Florida in the morning and I would be left behind in cold, miserable Washington. I took another sip of my beer and made my way toward the stairs to find a phone charger lying around. It would be rude to not call Kylo back.

My coordination was getting worse and I managed to trip up the stairs, spilling the rest of my beer on the smooth wood. A familiar laugh behind me chastised my walking while the person helped me up, and I realized it was Poe once again. He was very clingy for some reason. As far as I could tell, things were going great with Miranda so he had no reason to want me as a rebound.

We went up the stairs and past two bedrooms to his room. It was familiar, even in my drunken state: the different posters on the blue walls, the soft carpet underneath my hands when I unceremoniously collapsed. I dragged myself across the floor until I couldn’t move any further and lay there with my phone in my grasp. Shit. Was Dr. Ren going to be irritated when I saw him Tuesday?

I groggily registered a hand beside my head. I was face-down on the floor.

“Miranda had to go,” Poe said, words garbling together. “We’re all alone, Reybee.”

Then I felt hands fumbling with my pants and I groaned, trying to push myself up. Poe was heavy. He weighed me down and I could feel his hot breath in my hair that smelled like beer. Shit. Out of all the parties I had gone to, it was the first time a guy had tried anything when I was drunk.

“Wasshup with you?” I muttered.

“Nothin’. You wanna do it?”



It was uncommon for me to puke, but I attributed my vomiting episode to being nervous about Kylo and even more nervous about Poe. The first mouthful spilled out in a hiccup and Poe immediately hoisted me off the floor to bring me to the bathroom, barely getting me there in time so I could finish in the toilet. I'd just kept drinking and drinking and drinking... of course it was going to catch up with me soon enough.

Poe sat beside me and held my hair. "Raincheck, then."

## For my unconquerable soul.

### Chapter Notes

it BEGINSSSSS

*“I’m really sorry about what happened at the party. I should’ve paid more attention but... well, you know how it is when I drink a lot. Sometimes I get grabby. Please don’t tell Miranda.”*

It was Tuesday morning and a few days had passed since my incident with Poe and the congruent incident with Dr. Ren. I was slumped over the kitchen table morosely scrolling through my texts in hopes of seeing an apology from Poe or an admittance of love but he had been pointedly ignoring me since he called me Saturday afternoon. I had been shuffling around the house in my sweats with my hair strung in a greasy, sloppy ponytail. Love hurt.

Kylo had yet to call or text me back as well. I didn’t know if I was still supposed to go to his house to start my second attempt at astronomy but I assumed the deal was off. I’d probably made him realize what a complete fuck-up I was and he was running for the hills before I got him fired. Typical. It felt like every guy was trying to avoid me, no thanks to my party girl reputation.

“I haven’t even had sex!” I shouted into the table.

The house was silent in response. No one was home to ask why I was moping around; not that they would bother, anyway. I slowly beat my forehead against the smooth table and cursed my family for having things to occupy themselves with. Mom was at a scrapbooking party with her friend Felicia, dad was at work as always, and my bratty little sister was hanging out with a bratty little boy.

I dramatically rose from the table and trudged upstairs to my bedroom to pick out clothes for the day. Rose was gone for an entire month in sunny Florida, Poe wouldn’t talk to me, and Kylo had given up on my hidden genius. Scowling, I threw a pair of jeans and a v-neck on my bed. I needed to go outside ice fishing or get a group of people to go skiing with. There was plenty of stuff to do in the winter, even if it was miserably cold. I was an athlete, dammit!

My shower helped brighten my mood a little and I risked texting Poe to apologize for what happened, even though it wasn’t my fault. He’d brought *me* to his bedroom and tried initiating things. I was completely wasted and thanks to my vomiting, nothing happened. He should’ve been praising me.

I collapsed in bed in my clean outfit with my freshly washed and dried hair pulled back into a lazy ponytail. My room had too much pink in it. I needed to get back to my roots and start acting like a guy again because it felt like being a girl only brought pain. Irritated, I rolled over on my stomach to punch my pillow a few times and glared at my silent cell phone.

“Please don’t tell Miranda,” I said in snarky tone. “My precious Miranda can’t know because she’s such a goddamn princess. Christ, if I wasn’t such a good person—”

My phone vibrated once, alerting me of a new text message. I blinked at it, surprise Poe had replied so quickly, and hastily scooped it up to see what he said. Please say everything’s the same, please

say nothing's change, please invite me over so I don't die of boredom.

*Hello, Miss Kenobi. I expect your arrival at 6 o'clock sharp.*

Surprisingly, it was even better than a reply from Poe. My heart started pounding and I quickly typed back an affirmative reply before rolling out of bed, suddenly energized. At least one person was still available to me and didn't pray for my untimely death.

Luna's called and asked me to pick up a shift. I agreed because it would keep me busy while I waited to go over to my professor's very elaborate home in the woods. Excited, I changed into my khakis and red polo for work and hurried out the door to my patiently waiting SUV. I was a bit of a slacker with work and tried to avoid it as much as possible, but I saved whatever money I made very carefully.

The drug store I worked at was a fairly peaceful place and we didn't get a ton of business. I smiled at a few of our regular customers and walked behind the front counter where I worked as a general cashier. My manager, Lena, was busy browsing our sales goals and only waved vaguely to me when I walked past her to hang up my coat in the back room. She was pushing 30 and awfully pretty, with long blonde hair that she usually kept in a braid. Oddly enough, she wasn't married.

I frowned to myself while I adjusted my hair in the reflection of the door. Why was I suddenly so concerned with everyone's marital status? I wasn't even 20 yet and nowhere near ready for that kind of commitment, but lately I'd been pegging everyone for their life choices. How judgmental.

"You're spirited today," Lena said with a small smile. "Have a good night last night?"

"Not really, I'm just so excited to be working that I can hardly contain myself."

"So sarcastic! C'mon, I need you to start working on this new planogram for me. You should be out of here by five if you're quick."

So I doggedly worked for the afternoon, cashing people out and reordering supplies on the shelf while Lena tended to other things. It wasn't a terribly demanding job. I laughed at jokes I'd heard a thousand times and checked my cell phone compulsively, seeking a text from Kylo rather than Poe. I'd gone from having no guys to worry about to two in one night.

Lena waved goodbye when my replacement came in, a younger guy named Jake who I sort of got along with. I glanced at the clock and was worried when I saw the time: it was already quarter to six and I had to drive all the way to Kylo's house. I texted him to say I might be a few minutes late and booked it through town to the edge of the forest, where his home sat in quiet loneliness.

It was a bummer that I couldn't change out of my dorky work uniform but I wasn't too concerned. I locked my car and walked up the crunchy gravel driveway to Kylo's dimly illuminated home, glancing around nervously in the darkness. It was kind of creepy near the forest. I stood on his porch and had raised my fist to knock when it was suddenly pulled open with a flourish.

Kylo's black hair was tousled like he had recently woken up, and the sleeves on his grey dress shirt were pushed back to reveal muscular forearms. He was wearing black dress pants with a belt looped through them and even had shoes on. Was he going somewhere?

I stammered a few words out. "Uh... hey. I'm here."

He smiled, but it didn't quite touch his eyes. "So you are. Come in, Miss Kenobi."

Oh no, we were back to the formal greetings. I stepped inside his warm home and immediately

took my shoes off, hugging myself like an insecure preteen. Kylo shut the door behind me and began to walk toward the kitchen, gesturing vaguely for me to follow. I scurried like a preteen, too.

The kitchen was as cold and off-putting as Kylo could be. The counters were alabaster white and the floor was black and white patterned. All of the appliances were stainless steel. The island in the middle had a selection of various pans hanging overhead that I had noticed before, but the beams supporting it were wrought iron rather than wood. High, black-seated stools were placed around the island. The lighting was harsh and unforgiving like a hospital room.

Dr. Ren's shoes clicked on the floor as he walked to a cabinet beside the microwave to remove two wine glasses, cupping them gently in his palms with the stems between his middle and ring fingers. He set them on the island and stood back to look down at something I couldn't see, brow furrowed, then leaned forward to pull a long bottle of wine from the obscured rack. I stood by the doorway and blinked at him like an idiot. Wine? I wasn't 21.

Why were we drinking, anyway? That made it hard to think about astronomy. I had a hard time stopping myself once I started, not that I'd ever tell Dr. Ren that. I hugged myself tighter.

"I would ask if you prefer red or white," he said as he poured the purplish liquid into a glass, "but you don't strike me as a wine connoisseur, Reybee." He smiled at me when he moved on to the second glass and I shrank back, humiliated. "You're more partial to boxed, I assume."

I covered my face. Please let me disappear, God.

"I'm so, so sorry," I said for the hundredth time. "I didn't know you'd call me and I swear nothing like that will happen again. It was so disrespectful of me."

The cap was screwed back on the bottle and Kylo returned it to the rack. He swept one of the goblets into his hand and took a distinguished sip from it, watching the steel clock on his wall with great interest. I'd really screwed up. He was trying to help me and I was acting like a drunken moron.

"If you'd like my help, you cannot attend those types of parties," he said, swirling my cup of wine by with a casual twist of the wrist. "I cannot teach a drunken teenager."

"That's fine," I conceded. I figured I could hide it from him easily enough, anyway.

"Good. Take your wine and we can begin reviewing the properties you recited to me last week."

At that, I hesitated. "I'm not 21."

Kylo's smiled widened and he walked around the edge of the island to approach me, tall and imposing under the bright lights. He offered the glass to me with his palm tilted forward.

"A bit of wine loosens the mind," he purred.

"But... are you sure...?"

"My mother was French, Rey. I do not have the same qualms about a bit of harmless alcohol that you Americans seem to cling to." He turned the cup around a bit to make the liquid stir around like a wave. "You will be perfectly lucid after one small glass."

"...Alright." I accepted it and looked down at the foreign drink, then back up at Kylo. "Oh, and I prefer white. Don't look down on us hillbilly Americans too much, Dr. Ren."

Kylo's white teeth shone through his lips in a grin. "Oh, you *are* a treat."

We went to the living room and sat together on the big black couch to start my astronomy class. It was mostly review and I wasn't caught up on a single problem, breezing through each rapid-fire question with ease and surprising even myself. Kylo put on a pair of reading glasses to study my scribbles that somehow made him even more attractive, and I busied myself with my wine. Nope. After all the drama, it wasn't a good idea to start letting my mind wander.

While he was correcting the last of my responses and I silently nursed my dwindling cup of wine, my mind began to wander all on its own. Hm. He wasn't 30 yet. He was older than me, but that wasn't too big of a deal. If I brought someone like Kylo to a party it would make Poe really jealous.

No, no; that would ruin everything. Professors weren't supposed to date students and ten years kind of was a big deal. I frowned a little. There had to be a woman in his life, anyway. There was no reason why someone like Kylo would live totally alone on the fringes of society. I thought he'd be a weirdo but he was incredibly sophisticated and self-assured, and the way he *walked*—it was odd, but it looked like he was floating across the floor sometimes. Everything about him was effortless.

"You should consider bringing a flask to class," Kylo said, stroking his chin. "If it's possible, your math is even more precise with a glass of wine coursing through your veins."

"See? I have a perfectly valid excuse for partying, which is why I should continue to do it."

He glanced at me from the corner of his eye. I had drawn my legs up on the couch and curled them underneath myself as the hours ticked by, leaning back like I was being painted in an expensive portrait. I stopped dead in the middle of a sip of wine when I saw Kylo staring at me and began slowly unwinding my legs to put my feet back on the floor.

He touched my foot gently. "I was only evaluating how much wine you had left, Rey. You're free to make yourself comfortable."

"Sorry," I ejaculated before I could stop myself. "And I'm sorry for apologizing, too."

"Are you sorry for forgetting the nightgown as well?"

I gasped and covered my mouth in horror. Oh, shit! After how many times I promised I'd bring it back, it completely slipped my mind!

"I'm *so* sorry!" I said, horrified. "That's so rude of me! If you want I can go home and get it now."

Kylo laughed, and it sounded like he didn't do that often. That or he was forcing himself. "Don't worry, I'm sure you'll remember when I see you Friday evening. Speaking of which, it's getting late. I've kept you almost two hours past the time I promised you could leave."

I set my glass on the coffee table and turned to look at the clock hanging on the back wall. Yep, it was nearly 11 o'clock but it seemed like I'd only been at Dr. Ren's house for an hour. I bit my lower lip and turned back to face him with a funny reply prepared, but his cold blue eyes doused my sense of humor. Was I imposing? It was probably a good idea to go home.

"I didn't even notice," I said. Hell, I hadn't even glanced at my cell phone.

"Neither did I. The wonders of space are quite engrossing." Kylo shut the notebook and scooped my empty glass off the coffee table, rising fluidly from the couch. "Another glass, Miss Kenobi?"

“Um... are you sure you don't want me to leave?”

“I happened to be enjoying your company. Are you offended by mine?”

When I stood up, it wasn't nearly as graceful. The wine rushed straight to my head and I stumbled, causing Kylo to raise an eyebrow. In spite of my love for alcohol, I was a horrible lightweight.

I clutched my head and grimaced. “Sorry, kind of woozy.”

Kylo's blue eyes shifted down my body and he finished the last bit of his wine. “I'm very fond of the way you constantly apologize for slight affronts. It's... endearing.”

“Like a puppy gnawing on your fingers or a drunk person proclaiming their undying love?”

“The prior. I don't find it unappealing. Why don't you sit and relax? I'll bring the wine so you don't collapse and fall into a coma.”

“You're so considerate,” I muttered as he walked away.

Dutifully, I sunk back into the soft embrace of the couch and licked my lips, savoring the sweet aftertaste of the wine. That was the nice thing about softer drinks—they made you feel pleasantly warm and sleepy instead of invincible and nauseous. It was nice to drink socially without intending on getting wasted and throwing up in a plant. Kylo was well on his way to making me as fancy as he was.

I looked over the edge of the couch at the clock again. Mom and Rian would wonder where I was but they wouldn't worry, which meant I could stay out fairly late. I'd still be able to drive home after one more glass and I wouldn't have to hog Kylo's spare bedroom again.

No, I needed to go home after one more measly glass and sleep in my own bed. It was like I had no sense of self-restraint anymore, what with Rose on the other side of the country and Poe agonizingly silent. My vision was a bit hazy. Only one glass of wine and I was already half-asleep.

Kylo returned and offered me my glass back, but this time it was filled with a clearer variety of wine. I smiled wryly at him when he sat down beside me and his lips twanged with a returning smile, parting slightly to imbibe a sip of white wine. Was I looking at the wrong men? Were there really ones like Kylo wandering around alone and unattached, waiting to be found? He was too good to be true.

“You're really not with anyone?” I asked, emboldened by the wine.

He smirked like he was enjoying a private joke. “No. I don't function well in relationships.”

Huh. That was a bit of a bummer. I took a dainty drink from my glass and set it on the coffee table as my eyes began to close. My belly was warm and comfortable.

“Drowsy, Miss Kenobi?”

“Mhm,” I murmured. “Must have been all the fun astronomy.”

“Sarcasm is the lowest form of wit.”

“Yeah... guess so...”

I could see Kylo watching me through my steadily failing vision. The glass was tipped to his lips and his eyes were narrowed and calculative like a cat eyeing a mouse, waiting for the proper

moment to strike. He set his glass beside mine and I felt bad I had hardly made it through a mouthful of the wine. That was rude of me to ask for something and not bother finishing it.

He propped his chin in his palm. "Will you be sleeping here this evening?"

Even though his words made my heart wrench nervously I couldn't draw myself out of my stupor. I yawned, nodding slowly, and my head lolled lazily to the side. Whatever. One more night wouldn't kill me or anything, would it? Dr. Ren was a nice guy.

Kylo stood, and I soon felt him lifting me off the couch like I was light as a feather. I drooped over his shoulder and struggled to open my eyes, vaguely realizing that one glass of wine shouldn't have such a strong effect upon me. But he carried me up the stairs and down the hall to a different bedroom; his bedroom, and carefully laid me on the bed. I rolled over on my side and nestled into the soft sheets.

A drawer opened. "While I wouldn't mind you sleeping in my bed, I'm worried about what your reaction will be when you wake up," Kylo said. He rummaged. "Hm, no more clothes. Pity. I need to remember to keep some articles instead of wasting them."

*What...?*

A shadow eclipsed me and I blearily looked up to see Kylo standing over me, smiling with his head cocked. It must have been a trick of the light, but he looked awfully scary. He placed something besides my head and put his hands on his hips like he was waiting for me to do something.

Confused, I glanced over to see a pair of grey pajama pants and a blue dress shirt folded neatly on the sheets. I assumed it was for me to wear to bed and I blindly reached for the pants without considering where I was or what I was doing. His eyes were on me. I dragged the pants onto my stomach and began unbuttoning my khakis, fumbling with the complicated motions. Shit, I was exhausted.

"Would you like some help, Rey?" crooned Kylo.

I could barely get my own eyelids open. I nodded.

Then I felt his fingers brush my belly as he unbuttoned my pants for me and pulled them down my legs so they dropped with a muffled sound to the floor. He took the pajama pants and grasped my calf gently to slide each of my legs into them, leaning forward to bring them up to my hips. I slumped against his chest when he lifted me to pull off my shirt but noted that he left my bra alone. He moved my arms into the sleeves of the dress shirt and allowed me to drop back to the covers.

When I heard his belt clinking, I whimpered reflexively. No, no, don't...

"Shh," he whispered, "be still, ma petite fille. I'm only changing out of my own clothes." The belt hissed out of the loops and I heard it fall to the floor. "Admittedly, I'm a bit tempted."

My eyes rolled back in my head as I finally passed out. Whatever. Dr. Ren was a nice guy.

## In the fell clutch of circumstance

### Chapter Notes

so..... i based a lot of rey's reactions off of how i personally, as a former 19 year old girl, would respond. no, it's not always logical. the fun thing about 1st person POV is that you can make them unreliable and straight up dumb sometimes, because we never completely understand what's going on. and i love an unreliable narrator.

rey is pretty gullible and impressionable, and while her choices might objectively seem dumb as fuck, they're hers to make in the end. anyway..... just my \$.02 going forward as she makes questionable decisions. no one commenting here prompted me to post this; it was a complaint in the original fiction from many moons ago

A sharp and painful ringing in my ears drove me from unconsciousness the next morning.

I buried my head under the sheets and squeezed my eyes shut, waiting for the horrible agony to ebb away before I started crying. Shit, it hurt worse than when I broke my finger during a softball game. I struggled to remember exactly how much I had drank the night before but my memory was spotty and weak, only drawing vague snippets of Kylo sitting beside me on the couch.

All was not lost, though. I was in the bed I had slept in before and from what I was feeling, we hadn't done anything. I squeezed my thighs together and shivered slightly from both the pulsing pain between my ears and the thought of actually doing *something* with Dr. Ren. Alcohol never seemed to work out well for me—I was probably in so much pain because I'd drank so much the night of Poe's party. I curled into a ball and took uneven, deep breaths.

The low groan on the bedroom door opening caught my attention. I turned over to blearily regard the visitor and wasn't shocked to see Kylo standing in the doorway with his hands in his pockets. He was dressed formally again in a charcoal grey dress shirt like he had somewhere to be. His chin was tilted up slightly and he was looking down on me, cold blue eyes studying my face. My chest felt tight.

"It's nearly mid-afternoon, Rey," he murmured. "I worried you would never wake."

"I'm okay, I'm okay." I tried to push myself up in bed and winced. "That's some intense wine you have. What is it 100-proof or something?"

He smiled tautly. "Of course not. Perhaps you were already predisposed to exhaustion."

It kind of made sense to my befuddled mind. I shrugged, weakly sitting up to rub the sleepiness from my face, and I noticed long blue sleeves drape around my elbows. My spine prickled as I glanced down to see a flat grey pair of pajama pants on my legs instead of my khakis from work. They were baggy and hung loosely around my hips, just like the dress shirt was big on my upper body.

*"Would you like some help, Rey?"*

I pulled the sheets up to my chin and stared into them as heat crept into my cheeks. Oh god no. No.



I did not pass out after one glass of wine and let Dr. Ren put me in pajamas. His pajamas, no less! Where did my constant idiocy end? When would I stop embarrassing myself in front of him?

“I’m so sorry,” I muttered into the covers, hiding my face. “I’ll never come here again.”

“But I would miss your endless blunders.”

The clothes smelled like his cologne, a mild scent that didn’t impose or distract the senses. I pushed my face deeper into the soft comforter and hoped I would suffocate then and there. He thought me constantly behaving like a dope was funny, but I knew he wouldn’t be laughing for very long. If I got drunk again and accidentally called or texted Kylo...

I slumped forward, folding over my pretzel-shaped legs. “I’m such an idiot.”

The bed shifted and I peered from my tangles of hair to see Kylo sitting at the end, hands clasped politely in his lap. It was a much different picture from the way he’d been looking at me the night before. Now he was pleasant and formal instead of scrutinizing and intimidating. His hair was brushed properly and more composed than it had been when I walked in the door, terrified that he was going to yell for my recent behavior.

Kylo didn’t seem like the shouting type, though. He actually didn’t strike me as the kind of man who argued at all, but was very good at settling arguments with calm words and logic. I blinked at him a few times before hiding my face again. He’d make someone happy, even if he hated relationships.

“You never returned my call last weekend,” he said. “I hope you weren’t harmed.”

I shook my head miserably. “No, I’m always careful when I go out. But it was the closest I’ve ever been to having something happen, and it was Poe of all people.” I sighed and stared into the dark recesses of the sheets, filled with unyielding sadness. “Now he won’t talk to me. Lately I’ve become really good at screwing things up, and Rose’s gonna get a kick out of it when she comes home.”

The bed moved slightly. “Poe Dameron, correct? An exercise science major.”

“Yeah, that’s him. He’s a nice guy and we’ve been friends since we were little. Of course, that doesn’t mean anything now and he’s dating the captain of the volleyball team, Miranda Kemp.”

“Miranda? Is that with an ‘i’ or a ‘y’?”

“I,” I replied offhandedly. Now I was on a roll and the words weren’t stopping. I raised my head from the covers and brushed my hair out of my face, scowling. “I mean, she’s nice and everything but I’ve been his friend forever so it’s annoying seeing her come in and take him like that. You know?”

“I’m ascertaining that you’re attracted to him,” Kylo said.

“He should’ve apologized to *me*!” I fumed, completely ignoring Kylo. “He dragged me up the stairs and pushed me down on the floor. He made me so nervous that I puked. I have nothing to apologize for.”

Dr. Ren opened his mouth to reply but the peal of the doorbell interrupted him. His head snapped in the direction of the bedroom door like a cornered wild animal, and he looked back at me a few seconds later with a pacifying smile. He rose from the bed and I also moved to stand but he gestured for me to stay in the room. I didn’t want anyone catching me in such an incriminating

situation so I quietly obeyed and slid beneath the sheets as Kylo left the room.

His steps were so light that I couldn't hear them on the stairs, but I heard the front door hiss as the doorjamb slid across the smooth wooden floor. I strained my ears to hear a voice, curious to know what kinds of people Dr. Ren associated with. He struck me as a loner.

A deep male voice greeted Kylo and I heard hands clap together. The door shut a few moments later and laughter drifted up the stairs. I gnawed on my lower lip, debating whether or not to investigate, and chose to slip out of bed to see who had come over to the lonely house at the edge of the woods. Shoes clicked on the familiar linoleum in the kitchen and I swayed out of bed to make my way downstairs.

My vision swam. I had to lean against the wall once or twice to regain my bearings and very, very carefully chose each step I took. Whoever Kylo was talking to was clearly a good friend because their conversation didn't lull in the slightest. The sweatpants kept slipping down my hips. Damn, Kylo kept some really pungent wine. I didn't know when I'd be able to drive again.

Kylo was leaning against the kitchen counter with a glass of water in his hand, smiling at a slightly shorter man sitting at the island. I stepped unsurely into the room to observe them and noticed the newcomer was kind of old, maybe in his 50s or pushing 60. He had grey hair that was pulled into a ponytail at the nape of his neck and plenty of wrinkles on his face, along with some extra weight. I squinted at him, trying to decide what he was.

Dr. Ren's gaze flickered to me and the man sitting at the island turned to see what he was looking at, promptly fixating me with a shocked stare. He had blue eyes that were much less penetrating than Kylo's and I noticed a faded gold wedding band on his finger.

I wavered on my feet. The man's eyes narrowed infinitesimally but neither of them spoke.

"I'm sorry!" I blurted. "I'll go back upstairs and sleep or something." I took a step backwards, waving stupidly at them and tripping over my own feet.

The man stood up suddenly. "No, please, join us. I'm Dr. Luke Skywalker. What's your name?"

Kylo wasn't smiling anymore. His gaze was hard and directed toward the formal dining room, completely avoiding Dr. Skywalker and I. Maybe Poe worked at the school and I had accidentally given us away. We hadn't done anything wrong, except for my glass of wine, but it would've looked that way because I was wearing Kylo's clothes. Goddammit, I needed to start doing what I was told.

I rocked back on my heels, ready to bolt. "Um... I'm actually not feeling very good so I'll just go back to bed and let you two finish talking." I pulled on the shirt and laughed sheepishly. "This is really not what it looks like, even though I know it looks bad. Uh... I um..." I pressed to the wall, terrified of Dr. Skywalker's eyes and Kylo's angry, redirected expression. "I'm so, so sorry."

"You have nothing to apologize for," Luke said. "I don't work for your college. I'm an old acquaintance of Dr. Ren's and nothing more. Come sit with us—what was your name?"

The cup Kylo was drinking from was slammed down on the island and I jolted in surprise, heart thundering like a fawn's in a bear's line of sight. He placed his palms calmly on the countertop and his head tilted a bit in a way that was supposed to be friendly but took on a frightening edge paired with his forced smile. I took another step back.

"You still look very pale, princesse," he said, layering on his accent thick in the last word.

“Perhaps you should rest a bit longer before returning home today, hm?”

“I’m sorry,” I squeaked. “I’ll go back upstairs!”

Holy hell was he menacing. I’d never been frightened to the point of shaking, but I noticed my knees were wobbling under Kylo’s frigid blue eyes. It felt like they were shoving me out of the room.

“Now, now, we mustn’t be rude, Kylo,” Luke said calmly. “Sit with us, please. I insist.”

Ah, I’d probably embarrassed Dr. Ren beyond belief. He sucked in his right cheek and turned to face the sink without saying another word, so I tentatively tiptoed to the island. I sat beside Dr. Skywalker and he smiled at me warmly, holding his own glass of water. He was dressed to the nines like Kylo.

I twiddled my thumbs. “My name’s Rey Kenobi and I swear I didn’t... you know, sleep with him last night or anything.” I leaned closer to Luke, conspiratorial. “We didn’t even sleep in the same bed.”

“You can call me Luke, Rey. I’ve been a psychiatrist for nearly 30 years.”

“Really? That’s cool. I was considering that for my major but Kylo convinced me to do astronomy.” I winced as a small tremor of pain wracked my head.

“Or were you dragooned into it?”

Something clinked in the sink. “Don’t use such archaic terms, Luke. They escape Rey’s notice.”

“Thanks,” I muttered, glaring at Kylo’s back.

Luke’s eyes moved between us. “I’m going to assume that you enjoy the same mathematical drivel Kylo is so fond of, correct?”

I figured Kylo was trying to get a reaction out of Kylo. He turned to face us, scowling.

“It could be worse,” he said tersely. “I could have a Ph.D. in a pseudoscience.”

“You’re so fiercely defensive of your stars and theories.”

“And you sleep with your prescription pad tucked under your pillow in the event a patient needs a hit of Xanax before his next appointment.”

“I don’t have a Ph.D. in anything!” I said cheerfully.

The two of them didn’t break eye contact for a couple more moments but Kylo eventually returned to preparing the dishes for the washer. I shifted in my seat. It was pretty awkward watching two smart people arguing about their degrees. Both of them were useful in my opinion.

“Well, I suppose I should be going,” Luke said. He glanced at his watch and sighed. “Mara won’t be very happy with me if I miss our dinner tonight. As always, it was a pleasure seeing you, Kylo.” He turned to me as he rose and inclined his head. “Stay safe, Miss Kenobi.”

And a minute later, I was left alone in the kitchen with Dr. Ren.

It was mildly terrifying. I could tell he was angry by the stiff way he put things in the dishwasher and of course, how he refused to turn and look at me. Shamed, I slid off my seat and tried to creep

out of the room with my tail between my legs like a dog that had been scolded. It was better to leave him alone and let him collect his thoughts. Besides, I was almost ready to drive home.

“Rey.”

I stopped dead, flinching. “Yes?”

A few cups clattered together. “Where are you going?”

*As far away as I can get right now.*

“You seem busy so I was going to go back upstairs and lie down again,” I said.

Kylo put the last of the dishes in the machine and turned it on before regarding me, idly drying his hands with a red dishcloth. I waited with bated breath for his next words.

“You must be hungry,” he said. “Would you like to go out for dinner this evening?”

*WHAT?!*

I rubbed my forehead. “I’m sorry, I must still be hung over or something. Did you ask if I wanted to go out for dinner? It’s only like three in the afternoon and I’ve been enough of a pain in the ass.”

“Only when you disobey me,” his murmured, smiling. “If you’d like, I can make us dinner here instead, or I can bring you home so you can change. As attractive as I find them, I doubt you’ll want to be seen in public with my ill-fitting clothes draped over you, oui?”

“Are you sure that’s a good idea? You don’t have to clothe me *and* feed me.”

Kylo stroked his chin, eyeing me with interest. “No, I don’t, but I do enjoy it. We will eat here this evening and go out to dine on a day you’re feeling more... chipper.” He flipped the towel over his shoulder and looked toward his huge stainless steel refrigerator. “What to make, I wonder?”

Oh god, my French professor was going to make me dinner. It immediately conjured images of snails reinforced by jokes on the playground when I was a kid, but also reminded me that they really enjoyed their wine. I gagged at the thought of drinking any more of it and Kylo’s gaze returned to me again.

“Can we, um... skip the wine?” I asked contritely.

“Of course. We’ll have champagne instead.”

## What immortal hand or eye,

### Chapter Notes

kylo pov, you've been warned

also did u guys know that stabbing someone is actually fucking exhausting? it takes a lot of stamina. wild

The small family flickering on the hotel's television was all smiles, gazing fondly upon one another in their blessed little web of dysfunctional perfection. They chased one another about their carefully constructed home and shook fists but toward the end of the episode, they were always brought back together. I took a long drag from my cigarette as I watched them prance about and pointedly ignored the woman quivering beside me. She could wait.

My impromptu supper with Rey had been painstaking. It was an unfortunately vital part of my plan—to possess her via microcuts rather than one violent intrusion—and I had been severely strained the length of our dinner.

I twisted my neck at the memory and tightened my jaw. No matter. Patience was my greatest asset.

However, my obsessive tendencies were a serious detriment. Hardly a week had gone by since I first laid eyes upon Miss Kenobi and each evening I forcibly twisted my wheel in the opposing direction of her home nestled in the suburbs to the dark, forbidding city. There were plenty of substitutes.

The girl beside me began to sob into the layers of duct tape I had pressed across her mouth. She was not the typical filth I scraped from the sidewalks, but a perfectly respectable teenager who had wandered down the sidewalk while my starving eyes hunted for the next meal. Short, thin, brown hair, and blue eyes that I had grown to truly loathe. I'd only bound her wrists and done nothing more. If I missed my sitcom, my psyche would splinter.

Renee was her name. She was trembling violently enough to shake the bed and it irritated me. I held my cigarette between my lips and kept my eyes trained on the television to watch the news report, idly grasping her by the hair at the nape of her neck to drag her into my lap. I grasped my sheathed knife by the hilt and offered the covered blade to her until she obediently exposed the stained silver.

"Thank you," I said offhandedly. I squinted at the screen, yanking on Renee's hair. "It's that Russian character again. He's already caused an incident." I shook my head and sighed. "Some people don't know how to clean up their own mess, Renee. I'll make sure there isn't a drop of you left."

She shrieked, struggling wildly in my grasp and nearly causing me to drop my cigarette. I pulled on her hair until it began to give way at the root and forced her onto her stomach, pushing her face into the pillows. Her hips trembled between my knees. I held the knife loosely in the crux of my thumb to exhale a plume of smoke and ground the remnants out on Renee's exposed shoulder blade. Her screaming was absorbed by the pillows and was reduced to only a muffled protest.

The knife wasn't particularly necessary to keep them demure but it certainly helped the process along. I placed it carefully on the nightstand and continued pressing her face into the pillows whilst unbuckling my pants, still listening to the television playing loudly across the room. The soap operas had begun.

I lay down flat across Renee's shivering body, relishing in her fear, and lifted her head briefly to gauge her facial expression. Her eyes were squeezed shut. It was a pity: I was accustomed to women wholeheartedly agreeing to sex but staunchly refusing to let me stab them. It was for the betterment of mankind. When I had Rey in my grasp, my sprees would surely decrease in ferocity and quantity.

My dear Renee had worn a skirt. It was lined with frilled lace and colored dark blue, highly inappropriate for the weather outside. She thrashed violently when I slowly moved her panties aside and my fingers briefly brushed against her wet folds. Though I was tempted to take her immediately, I was not willing to risk contracting a disease from a strange woman on the street.

I casually slid my middle finger inside her and she seized, squeezing her thighs together in pain. She was tight and unyielding; perhaps one of the few virgins I had stumbled across. I pressed my face into her hair and inhaled deeply, slowly stretching her while she wept into her pillow.

"How did you know I like mango shampoo?" I murmured into her scalp.

Renee ceased movement upon hearing the rather distracting tear of my protection. It was mildly disappointing, but release was release and I would not throw away such a valuable discovery.

The bed made incriminating sounds when my body finally joined the unwilling woman beneath me. I had taken so many in the same bed that I knew precisely which way to move to avoid the noises, but it seemed to upset my resistant victims much more when they could hear and feel me moving inside them. The goal was to humiliate and dominate, after all.

I buried my face in Renee's neck to stifle my moans that I was helpless to control. I'd tried many times to remain silent during the process and occasionally, it was possible, but her slick tightness reminded me keenly of what Rey would feel like. Oh, Rey. I would surely be violent with her.

One of my hands wrapped about Renee's neck. Yes, I would squeeze her windpipe to feel her writhe against me; I would hold her fragile life in my palm, free to quash her when I pleased. Her mouth would remain uncovered so I could hear her tiny voice begging and pleading and *squealing* and her sobs would resonate all the better in her mouth. It was dangerous and left me in a precarious position, but perhaps I would force her to take me between her pretty lips.

Ah, the way she watched me through half-lidded eyes while I stripped her. I groaned into Renee's neck, strongly considering taking her clothing for Rey to wear if she 'accidentally' slept in my home again. Skirts were best. They offered little protection and a swift assault.

No, no; I was going to take my time with Miss Kenobi. It would be a grand event each time and I would never squander her away. Against my instinct, I would not stab her exactly 33 times to let her bleed out on my bed sheets. There would be copious white wine and a loud piece of music for the first evening—perhaps Mozart's Requiem or Beethoven's 5<sup>th</sup> Symphony—to set her fears alight and let them burn through her bones. The way her cries would mingle with each musical note...

Renee choked on her tears as I plateaued inside her with guttural groan. Her narrow passage went into a fit of spasms and joined in my pleasure, much to my delight. I thrust deep within her and ruefully wished Rey was twisting helplessly against me, betrayed by her own body. Soon I would

coerce her into such things and rip her hidden ecstasy free. She would belong to me.

I panted a bit into Renee's hair to catch my breath before leaning back and opening my Mason jar. Her shoulders rose and fell as she took deep inhalations and listened to what I was preparing to do next. I deposited the condom as usual, the epicenter of genetic material, and placed the jar back on the nightstand to grasp the knife. The girl was trying to turn her head to look at me so I politely turned her onto her back so her teary blue eyes were staring up at me.

The girl's bound wrists were positioned protectively over her chest but her gaze weakened upon seeing the knife in my hand. I moved her arms above her head to grant access to the vulnerable expanse of her upper body and smiled down at her. Renee closed her eyes and began to cry again.

"Hush," I murmured, running my fingers along the top of the blade, "it will all be over soon."

My impulse drew my arm forward in a fluid motion to sink the blade with a bloody squelch beneath Renee's left breast. Her eyes bulged in agony; the realization that her life was within seconds of being extinguished, and a lamented cry was lost in the duct tape. I drew back, violently tearing the knife from her suction-cup flesh. Human skin had an elastic quality—when it was penetrated, it would stubbornly hold the offending object to retain as much blood as possible.

Stabbing a person to death was no simple task. It required extensive knowledge of the human body and the physical stamina to repeatedly penetrate unyielding flesh. I had grown accustomed to the difficult work involved and could successfully complete my 33 stabs without becoming completely exhausted.

Twenty minutes later my hands were covered in blood. I trembled slightly, again finding myself gazing down at the chilling corpse of another teenage girl. My intense compulsions drove me and my lack of conscience permitted me to kill them without losing sleep at night: to enjoy their deaths and relish in the fore coating my fingers. I wiped my bloody palm across her vacant eyes.

Clean-up was efficient as always. I rolled the body into the sheets and lifted Renee gently into my arms to bring her to her resting place. The attendant was looking through his phone as always and I quietly left, lying the corpse down in the backseat.

I stood before the swamp as Renee slowly sank into its depths. There would be many more sacrifices before I had attained my goal. I slipped my hands into my pockets and gazed at the murky water as it swallowed the last fiber of the girl's hair, hiding my crime for the conceivable rest of time.

# **I have not winced nor cried aloud**

## Chapter Notes

did u know in texas you could get a rifle if you opened an account with a certain bank???

i hate living in the U.S.

That Friday morning, before my second meeting with Kylo, I lay on my bed in my pajamas idly kicking my legs back and forth while Rose showed me sea shells she found. Her hair was plastered to her head from the salt water and she had a bit of sunburn but was obviously having a ton of fun. I ‘oood’ and ‘ahhed’ her growing collection, glancing at my cell phone occasionally in the hopes that Kylo sent me a random text. He’d grown fairly quiet after we had dinner together.

I’d been as polite as possible and eaten all of my food like mom and dad had taught me. Wasting the meal someone cooked could be read as a social faux-pas so I ate and ate until I was sure my stomach would burst open and spew the food into my other organs. We’d eaten in the formal dining room and Kylo sat across from me, cupping his glass of champagne and watching me chatter on and on through half-lidded eyes. It looked like he was daydreaming but still lucid enough to nod at the right times.

Rose cocked her head, frowning. “You’ve been different lately, Rey. Is Poe still bothering you about what happened at the party? That wasn’t your fault. You should tell Miranda.”

It was pretty horrible not being able to tell my best friend that I had been wine and dined by my very attractive astronomy professor. He’d even taken care of me when I was acting like a drunken moron and changed me into clean pajamas when I passed out after a glass of wine. I shivered a little at the memory of his fingertips grazing gently across my calves. It hadn’t been my best moment.

“These astronomy classes are so hard,” I whined. “I’ve only done one so far but Dr. Ren said it’s gonna get even worse.” I pouted my lower lip like a sad puppy. “Do my homework for me?”

“Oh, hell no. The genius in you has been exposed and she isn’t slinking away yet. It must be weird taking the classes online instead of being able to see him, though. I’d have a hard time getting things done on time without watching the lesson directly.”

“I manage,” I said.

My best friend had to go soon after because her little brother, Tony, was screaming about going out for dinner. She sarcastically blew me a kiss and ended the call while yelling at him to quit being a brat, leaving me staring at my black laptop screen. I sighed pitifully and leaned my head on my arm.

Knocking on the front door made me jump in surprise and I nearly flung my laptop off the bed. I rolled off my sheets and stumbled out of my room in my rush to answer it, flying down the stairs and skidding across the kitchen floor. Kira told me to slow down from the living room. My heart was pounding and I found myself stupidly hoping it was Kylo coming over to invite me to his house early.



Poe was standing before me in jeans and a t-shirt with his hands in his pockets. He smiled sheepishly and nodded his head in greeting. I stared at him. He didn't drop by randomly anymore.

"Can I come in?" he asked with a small laugh.

"I'm gonna tell mom you had a boy in your bedroom!"

I spun around to see Kira standing in the kitchen doorway also wearing her rattiest pajamas and clutching a blue bowl of popcorn to her chest. She shoveled a fitful in her mouth and while I glared at her, Poe stepped past me and walked inside without saying another word.

"Beat it," he said. He was well-acquainted with Kira's obnoxious behavior. "I'll tell Miranda to let her parents know what you've been doing with her little brother."

My eyes widened in outrage. Kira was sleeping with the enemy! Traitor!

But it worked. Kira stuck her tongue out and morosely returned to the living room to watch cartoons on our big flatscreen that dad got as a bonus from work. Poe shut the door behind him and smiled down at me again, radiant and bright like a ray of sunshine. It was odd how different he was from Kylo, who was more of a passionate and mysterious storm front that was probably too smart for me.

I leaned on the kitchen table, trying to feign nonchalance, and nearly fell over again. Shit.

"So, uh, what's up?" I asked as I blew my hair out of my face.

"Nothing. I needed to talk to you in person. Can we go upstairs to get some privacy?"

My mouth went dry. "Er... yeah, I guess. Is something wrong?" I straightened up and put my hands out defensively, hurrying to protect my reputation. "I didn't mean for anything to happen over the weekend, if that's what you want to talk about. If you told Miranda tell her I'm really sorry."

Poe didn't reply, but grabbed my wrist and pulled me up to my bedroom. Kira watched us through slitted eyelids as we ascended the stairs and popped individual pieces of popcorn in her mouth. I flipped her off before Poe pulled me around the corner to the second flight.

He whisked me into my room, kicking the door shut with his heel so it closed with a bang, then grasped my face between his hands. I hardly had time to squeal in shock before his lips were on mine in an aggressive and demanding way. Poe slammed me into my wall and held my face tightly with one hand to keep my mouth firmly pressed to his but wasted no time in slipping his tongue in my mouth.

Naturally, I bit him.

My childhood friend stumbled back and held his bleeding lip with an offended expression on his face. I was shaking, conforming my body as close to the wall as possible. We stared at one another.

"W-what was that for?!" I demanded. "You can't do that!"

His lip puckered slightly as he tasted his blood. He was smiling. "C'mon, Reybee; I was only trying to finish what we started. I was thinking it over since the party and decided it would work out for both of us. Don't you want me? You sure as hell act like it."

My eyes bugged. "You... you... What about Miranda?"

“I’ve gotta keep her around for appearances, Rey.” He tilted his head, grinning down at me lasciviously. “You understand, right?”

It felt like my soul was being run through a trash compactor. Not just my heart—I’d grown to love Poe beyond that sort of mortal bond and really wished he would open his eyes to that. But as I examined the man standing a few feet away from me flashing his pearly whites, I realized I had gotten caught up in a fairy tale again. The people you loved could very easily become the people you hated.

Poe had changed. He was not the same cute, quirky kid I had grown up catching frogs with and playing Pokemon all afternoon. He’d become a grown man and his moral compass was pointing in a radically different direction. My fingernails scraped on the wall. I was such a moron.

He frowned. “Something wrong?”

“You should leave,” I said in a breaking voice.

“Aw, you don’t mean that.”

“Get out, Poe. Now.”

But he wasn’t hesitating. Poe rolled his eyes and then he was crushing his body against mine again, smiling and shaking his head like I was a disobedient child. He covered my mouth and yanked me away from the wall to drop me on my bed while I kicked and screamed and tried to gnaw on his fingers, dizzied with fear. He was heavier than all hell and snatched my wrists in just one of his hands to pin them above my head. It *hurt*.

Poe leaned in close so I could see the dark flecks in his irises. I stared at him in terror, tears already streaming down my cheeks. How could he hate me? I loved him. How could he hate me?

And he promptly slapped me hard across the face, leaving my mouth exposed for a moment. I choked on my sobs but didn’t shriek like I should have. It was worse than a sting; worse than breaking my ankle. The pain gnawed down to the marrow of my bones as Poe smacked me again when I began to wail, trying to make me shut up. I could barely catch my breath to beg him to stop.

He squeezed my wrists. “See? I knew you didn’t mean it, Reybee. Let’s be quiet so little sissy doesn’t hear us, alright? I can’t have her spilling my secrets to Miranda.”

I was paralyzed. Poe... what happened to Poe?

My bedroom door flew open the next second and banged against the wall. Kira was holding dad’s pistol in her hand and my first reaction was older-sister concerns about how she had been able to get her hands on his gun. The thing was supposed to be locked away for emergencies.

Poe became very still on top of me. This technically counted as an emergency.

Kira held the gun firmly, unwavering. “Get out, Dameron. Dad brings me target shooting once a month so I won’t hesitate if you don’t get off my sister.”

“Oh please, like you know how to shoot without—”

A bullet erupted with a loud bang from the barrel of the gun and was buried in my bedroom wall just past Poe’s head milliseconds later. His face had drained of color but Kira was cool and collected, looking evenly at him with no hint of fear. She stepped back when he unwillingly got to his feet to make sure he didn’t slip behind her and try to take the weapon.

“I said get out,” Kira snapped when he lingered near my door.

“This better not get out,” he said, moving his gaze to me rather than my sister. “I’m warning both of you freaks to keep your mouths shut.”

It was surreal hearing such nasty things coming out of Poe’s mouth. I had stopped crying from sheer shock and only stared back at his deceptively friendly expression while Kira continued forcing him from the room, waving the gun aggressively. He could’ve taken it from her if he wanted to but he didn’t want to kill anyone. Or was that only because he didn’t want to get caught?

The front door shut and I heard all the locks sliding into place before Kira began running around the house to make sure everything was closed. Her feet squeaked over the hardwood and she muttered a few times when stubborn windows refused to shut. I was trembling and afraid to move. Some big sister I was—constantly calling her names and relying on her to save me.

Kira reappeared in my bedroom, her hazel eyes sharply scrutinizing my room for any signs of weakness. I didn’t think Poe would come back, but apparently I didn’t know him very well.

She heaved a sigh. “I think he’s gone, Rey.”

I couldn’t bring myself to nod. I stared straight ahead and hardly took a breath. What the hell just happened? Why couldn’t I have something good happen without something bad taking it away right after? Kylo was trying to encourage my natural talent and my family was so proud of me, but everything was Poe fell apart over a stupid weekend not long after. There was no happy medium. It felt like I was always losing.

My little sister sat next to me on the bed and looked at her palms for a minute, then suddenly flung her arms around my neck. It was weird how emotions worked sometimes—I was pretty sure I would never speak or cry again until Kira showed she felt for me in some way or another. I hugged her back fiercely and cried into her shoulder with wild abandon.

But there was one place in particular I *really* wanted to go.

# Under the bludgeonings of chance

## Chapter Notes

so sometimes he speaks in french; i don't translate it in the story because some people like not knowing what he's saying

you can slap it in google translate if you're curious or i can add it in a note at the end

Dropping in on Kylo was not one of my best ideas. I was beside myself with grief and fear despite everything Kira did to help me calm down and for some stupid reason, I thought going to see Dr. Ren would make me feel better. She watched from the front door as I scurried to my car and gave her an affirmative thumbs-up before driving off. We were both still on the lookout for Poe. I was more afraid for my sister than anything else but our parents were on their way home.

I wasn't due to go to his house for five or so hours and the sun was still high in the sky. It made the drive down the lonely road through the silent, leafless trees a lot less creepy. I kept my hands firmly on ten 'o clock and two 'o clock and tried to keep my lower lip from quivering. I'd washed my face to get rid of some of the redness and dried tears but I knew they were still there.

*You're well on your way to embarrassing yourself again, Rey. He already thinks you're a pain from all the trouble you've caused over the past week and now he's never going to see you again.*

A strangled cry tore free of my throat and I rubbed my face to hold back the tears. No wonder Poe called me a freak. I'd hardly known Kylo for a week and I was hurrying over to his house to wail about some dumb guy from our dumb college. He was almost 30 years old and had a full-time job to worry about. What did he care about teenage girl problems? I could tell I annoyed him.

"Goddammit!" I hissed, slamming my hand on the wheel. "I can't talk to Rose right now and I obviously can't talk to Poe. Kira's too young to really get it. What the hell else am I supposed to do, sit home and wait for him to start harassing me?"

But the memories of Kylo's irritated expression when I sidled into the kitchen during his morning with Dr. Skywalker were bright and clear in my mind. He'd slammed his cup down when I didn't leave quick enough and refused to look at Luke and I while we talked about nothing in particular.

I narrowly avoided a tortoise trying to cross the road, violently banking my car to the left just in the nick of time. My thoughts turned curiously—was Luke actually Kylo's therapist? Dr. Ren didn't look like he needed mental help, what with his Ph.D. and nice house in the middle of nowhere. He dressed nicely, talked smoothly, and never made a social overstep when conversing.

No, that was crazy. They were probably old friends from... college? Luke was a lot older than me and definitely much older than Kylo. They hadn't been clear on how they met but I'd been so startled by Kylo's angry reaction to my presence that I didn't ask many questions.

Dr. Skywalker looked really surprised by my being at the house and he kept staring at my face like he was looking for something...

My wrists began to pulsate in pain under my baggy sweater from my aggressive driving but I couldn't bear to look. I knew Poe had left bruises. Kira had warned me about going out because my

face didn't look very good, either, so I'd quickly brushed on concealer to hide it. I wasn't very good with makeup. It was splotchy but hid the gross marks well enough.

The lights were on at Kylo's house. I stepped out of my car onto the gravel with the red nightgown draped over my arm, freshly washed and pressed courtesy of my mother. There was a television show playing really loud inside that echoed through the trees, only interrupted by a nasty blast of cold air. I pulled my hoodie more tightly around myself and hurried to the front door with a pounding heart. My palms were sweaty. I knocked once and considered running the hell back home.

There were feet on the floor that paused at the door, probably looking through the eyehole. I shuffled nervously and stared at my feet as the door was pulled open and light spilled onto the porch.

"Hey," I mumbled without looking up. "I'm here early. Sorry."

He was quiet for a moment. "It's one in the afternoon, Rey. A five hour miscalculation is rather strange. Have you come here early for another reason?"

There was no easy way to broach the subject and I was beginning to feel really stupid. I shook my head furiously and teetered back on my heel, getting ready to leave. I'd come back later, or maybe not at all. From the way I kept forcing myself on him Kylo was bound to kick me to the curb.

It was quiet for a little while and the only sound was whatever sitcom he was watching. I saw Kylo's shoes move back as he stepped aside to let me into the house, pushing the door further open. His eyes were on me when I went inside and took my shoes off. I didn't know how to talk about it. Now I didn't even know if I wanted to talk about it. He was a man so he didn't understand.

Kylo also didn't ask questions. He walked back into the living room to sit on the couch without saying another word and I slowly followed him, still training my eyes on the floor. I sat on the other end of the sofa and picked at my hoodie while he continued to watch the TV show with one arm slung across the back of the couch. The clock ticked by in the background.

Maybe he had been busy doing something important and I interrupted him. My eyes flickered briefly from my lap and roamed the room to see Kylo intently focused on the television and a glass of water sitting in front of him. The only oddity was that he was wearing jeans and a green t-shirt instead of his typical formal attire. I looked at his hands and noticed his left that was resting casually on his knee had a slight tremor that only went away when he flexed his fingers.

"Were you busy?" I asked meekly.

His hard gaze didn't leave the screen. His jaw was set tight. "Yes."

Oh, goddammit. I shrank into my side of the couch and curled my legs beneath me, still holding the red nightgown in my arms. I should've found a party to go to instead of bothering Kylo.

A whole half hour passed before his shoulders relaxed and he looked away from the television. I couldn't believe how dedicated he was to watching his shows; even my grandma hadn't shown that kind of loyalty and she lounged around her house all day doing nothing. Kylo leaned forward to take a sip of his water and finally looked at me with a broad smile like nothing happened.

I held out the nightgown in a jerky motion. "I washed this and ironed it. Well, my mom did, but that's not because I don't know how. I was video chatting with Rose Thursday night so... um, here

you go. Thanks for letting me borrow it.”

Kylo leaned toward me to take the nightgown and his eyes were only on my face for a fraction of a second. He stopped in the middle of his movement and his blue eyes narrowed. I arched back with wide eyes, afraid that I had done something to offend him again. Did he not use laundry detergent? Some people were allergic and they’d break out in hives, so—

He put one hand on the side of the couch. “Why has your face suddenly become much darker than your neck, Miss Kenobi?”

That was an even worse discovery. I quickly clapped my hands over my cheeks like it would help hide my terrible make-up job and winced in pain. “It’s nothing. I don’t know how to use that stuff.”

“You’re right, you don’t. My mother could have offered a few helpful hints.” He moved closer until he was sitting right beside me, smiling frigidly. “Who was it?”

I blanched. “Who was who? I don’t know what you mean.”

Dr. Ren curled the nightgown around his hand and tried to wipe it across my cheek, but I jerked back before he could touch me, trapped between him and the couch. He grabbed my chin to keep me still and it was like being held by an iron bar: I could barely swallow. He dipped the nightgown in his water and drew it vertically down my cheek and I whimpered in pain from the bruise being touched.

He tutted like a hen, tilting my head to the side to see the entirety of the wound. I couldn’t see his expression but he didn’t sound angry, just disappointed. It was the weirdest reaction I could’ve imagined given the circumstances, like a mother chastising her child for tripping outside.

“I got in a fight with Kira,” I blurted. “We’re sisters so we do stuff like this sometimes, you know?”

“Que vais-je faire avec vous?” he said in a low tone.

Kylo released my face so I could turn to look at him but snatched my elbow a second later and held on tightly to push back my sleeve. My hand hung limply from my purple wrist, exposed and ugly. He did the same with my other sleeve and both of my wrists were in front of me so I was forced to remember what had happened with Poe. I averted my eyes to my lap in shame.

“Your sister has a very strong grip,” he murmured.

His fingers gently closed around the tips of mine and he raised my arms to delicately kiss my wrists, one and then the other. I still couldn’t bring myself to look at him. What the hell was I supposed to say? I didn’t really want to talk about it—I wasn’t into mushy feeling kind of stuff and I figured I’d cried enough times in front of Kylo to last me a lifetime. I chewed on the inside of my cheek.

Then he looked at me over my knuckles and his eyes were inscrutable, but he was smiling. I tried to disappear into the upholstery but he held my fingers with tender, unyielding pressure, not intending on letting go anytime soon. It was impossible to tell if he was angry and forcing himself to smile or genuinely found my injuries to be amusing, but I hoped it wasn’t the prior.

“I can go,” I said awkwardly. “It’s not like I can write, anyway. Maybe next week we can meet earlier and I’ll just do more work that day to make up for it.”

Kylo stood up very suddenly and now it was obvious that he was planting the inviting smile on his

face, but I was too upset to care. He stalked out of the living room and I was left alone on the couch with my hands still outstretched like he was holding them still, so I quickly retracted them to my chest and tugged down my sleeves. I didn't want to know what my cheek looked like.

There were some clinking sounds from the kitchen and he returned a few moments later with the stems of two wine glasses in either hand, making my stomach lurch. He wasn't going to ask me to leave? That was awfully nice of him. He could probably tell that I just didn't want to talk about it.

He sat down gracefully beside me, offering me the fuller cup of white wine, and I gratefully accepted it to take a few polite sips. These were the times I wanted to get drunk more than anything, which I was pretty positive was the definition of an alcoholic. Kylo drank from his and slammed it down on the coffee table so a bit of the clear liquid sloshed over the sides with a splash. He smiled to himself before running a hand through his hair quickly.

I watched him with wide eyes. He was definitely pissed off.

My astronomy professor stroked his chin, tapping his foot on the floor impatiently. His expression was rapidly going south and I crammed myself against the arm of the couch, busily drinking my wine. His emotions were getting volatile and he was totally unpredictable, prone to change like the wind.

I jumped when his head snapped to the left to glare at me and his face instantly softened. He cocked his head in an endearing way and his eyes flickered to my half-empty glass of wine. I got a creeping feeling that he wanted me to drink it fast for once instead of socially sipping. Inspired by his frightening gaze, I quickly downed the rest of the glass and winced as it slid down my throat.

"So..." I said, playing with my empty wine glass as the drink settled warmly in my stomach, "my makeup was that bad?"

Kylo was completely ignoring his wine. "No. My childhood trained me to accurately pinpoint a battered woman." He drummed his fingers on the arm on his side of the couch. "And no, I won't expand upon that. Would you like another drink, Rey?"

Huh. Come to think of it, I didn't remember much from when I had last had wine with Kylo. There were a few snippets my brain managed to pull back but it had been one of the worst cases of booze-influenced amnesia I ever experienced. But if he was trying to attack me he would've done it already.

I shrugged and noticed my shoulders felt heavy. Already? I'd hardly drunk a thing. Had I really screwed myself up when I went to the party at Poe's house?

Kylo picked up his wine glass that had left a ring on the coffee table. He took a small sip and I tried to focus on him but my vision shifted into fifty different pictures. I blearily slouched over my lap, confused. It was only one glass I had *just* drunk. Surely my stomach and liver hadn't processed it already.

I clutched my head, grimacing. "Oh, no. Something's wrong."

"We really must remedy your incompatibility with wine."

"...Ugh," I groaned, "where do you get this stuff?"

"Trade secret."

My ears started ringing and I worried I was going to throw up. I tried to stand up and make my way

to the bathroom only to collapse on the floor with a muffled yelp two feet from the couch. My eyelids were getting harder to keep open and they fluttered open and shut, protecting me from the hazy and distorted images my eyes were bringing. Shit, I'd never been this kind of drunk before.

Footsteps on the floor felt like they were shattering my sensitive eardrums. I squeezed my eyes shut as Kylo hooked his hands underneath my armpits to lift me from the floor and managed to support my completely languid body in his arms like he'd done it a hundred times. I lazily rested my head on his shoulder and sighed softly as we slowly ascended the stairs. Mmm, more sleep.

There were black spots in my vision by the time Kylo entered his bedroom. I thought I could feel him stroking my hair and murmuring something in my ear but I was so dizzy that I didn't know what was real and what wasn't. I slipped away from him when he lay me down on the bed, only able to keep one eyelid half open. All I could see was his vague outline.

"I have a bit of business to attend to," he said, idly beginning to unbutton my jeans. "You seem tired, Rey. Why don't you sleep here this evening? I'm beginning to like your company."

I blinked one eye at a time back at him. My brain had been slowed to a groggy halt and I couldn't even lift my hips when Kylo pulled off my jeans. He moved me to the end of the bed so he could stand between my naked knees and moved on to removing my thick hoodie. I whimpered when my wrists had to bend to fit out of the thing and he shushed me like a patient and doting parent.

For the second time in a week, Kylo changed me while I was nearly unconscious. There were a few times his touch lingered but I was almost jolted awake when I felt soft lips kiss my calves. I flinched when his hand gripped the underside of my thigh to give him better access to my legs.

"Je vais d'abord prendre ma revanche," Kylo muttered before finishing changing me.

The last confusing image I saw was Kylo leaving the room with something sticking out of his back pocket. Darkness swallowed me.



## Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

### Chapter Notes

idk i think she's gonna be fine???

The doors to Washington University's gymnasium flung open and a myriad of young women in tight, tempting shorts spilled into the cold night, laughing to one another and chattering avidly. Each of them had their perfectly pressed hair pulled into ponytails or, in the case of several, cut short enough to keep it from distracting them during their practice. Volleyball players—my least favorite variety of athlete.

I sat silently in my vehicle at the other end of the parking lot, scanning the group for the particular female I wanted. A browse on the school website had drawn up several pictures of her posing for photos after winning a volleyball game, flashing her teeth like a rabid dog when she smiled.

The most tortuous form of revenge was to destroy the boy's current lover first. My fingers twitched toward the box of cigarettes hidden in my glove compartment but my desire to extinguish life was a far greater hunger. Poe Dameron would pay for his grievous misstep. He had marked Rey; trying to slip her from my grasp, and such an affront could not be taken lightly. I would take from him in turn.

I knew the boy would be a problem when Rey first told me his name. Now was the time to strike.

I glared across the group of women with growing animosity until my eyes fell upon Miranda Kemp waving heartily to her friends as she walked toward her Volkswagen. Her legs were long with a mottled tan that I could discern was unnatural even in the pressing darkness, but she was otherwise very appealing. I watched her slide into the driver's seat of her car and answer a text message before she started her engine and left the parking lot.

My homicidal impulse did not waver as I followed Miranda through the town and remained a comfortable distance behind her. I tapped my fingers on my steering wheel at red lights, strongly considering smashing my vehicle into the back of hers to cleanly snap her neck.

No, I would make Mr. Dameron's woman *suffer* first. A death as swift as a car crash would be far too generous to suit my strict standards of eviscerating rivals. I had intended on adding his corpse to my swamp but hesitated for a bit longer to lure Rey closer and ensure she would not question the questionable circumstances. Slaughtering Miranda Kemp would sate my appetite.

Miss Kemp parked her car down the street from a seedy bar. She locked the small vehicle and proceeded on her way across the cracked sidewalk to slip inside without hesitation, as if a middle-class woman belonged in such a place. I glanced around to be sure the coast was clear and settled back to wait for her to emerge stumbling about drunkenly. I could not risk giving myself away and pursuing her inside the building. Any number of people could have pinpointed my appearance.

Thankfully, Rey was unconscious in my bed, hidden away from competitors as she should be. The pills in her wine were a stronger dose than I had administered on our first evening together, because I could not risk her awakening to realize I had left. Retrograde amnesia would pacify her and the profuse vomiting she would undoubtedly experience would contribute to her memory loss.

A pattern would emerge and Rey would notice repeatedly fainting after drinking a simple glass of wine. My ploy would only work several more times before it became useless and Miss Kenobi refused to accept drinks from me. She was rather demure and submissive, but I had learned that even the most malleable victims had an established break point.

Miranda emerged from the bar two hours later with a wide and bewildered smile on her face. She swayed toward her car, fumbling with her keys but now wearing a short black dress that was not an infinite improvement on her sports uniform. I checked that there were no eyes watching us and got out of my car in a smooth motion to cross the street toward her while she was distracted.

Her blue eyes hazily looked into mine as I reached out to cover her mouth with my hand, easily restraining her when she attempted to flee. Miranda screamed into my palm and grappled desperately with my fingers so I turned to smash her head against the hood of her car. She went limp.

I threw the unconscious woman over my shoulder and whistled merrily on the brief walk back to my own car, pocketing her keys. It would be better if the authorities never found them.

My favorite incompetent desk clerk was playing a game on his cell phone and granted me a room key without so much as glancing at Miranda. It was a key component of my rouse—he would never look at the woman's face and did not truly know if I was carrying the same one each time. Conversely, my wife excuse could be read as a man covering up lengthy and expensive affairs with prostitutes.

This female was a special circumstance.

I carelessly dropped Miranda on the floor when the bedroom door was shut and locked. She moaned softly, already rousing from her stupor, and I pulled down the blinds to prevent any prying eyes from watching our evening. I had brought along my essential supplies and nothing more. Restraining her was not important for what I had prepared. I would tolerate being touched for one night.

She struggled to push herself off the floor and I kicked in the ribs. Miranda could only gasp in shock and collapse again as I placed my foot on her head and slowly ground my heel into her temple, hands in my pockets. I smiled down at her cringe and leaned my weight on her skull to stomp on her hand when she attempted to grab my ankle. Her body shuddered violently and a shrill scream would have given me away, but her cheeks were crushed together.

"Your little boyfriend made a wrong move," I said, pressing my shoe with sadistic weight on her fracturing hand. "He's damaged my Rey, and I don't like to share."

Miss Kemp's voice filtered through her lips in a weak sound of confusion. I knelt on top of her and grabbed the collar of her dress to draw her bewildered and bloody head from the floor, though it lolled lazily to the side. I'd been a bit too rough with her already. Irreversible brain damage, perhaps.

Blood seeped from the corner of her mouth but she managed to speak. "Poe... wouldn't..."

I shook her violently until the fabric of the dress began to tear. "Would he, wouldn't he; it's all a very philosophical discussion to be held on another day, Miranda."

"...Rey... is a... freak..." she whispered. "...*Liar*... I hate her..."

I grabbed Miranda's chin, forcing her to meet my eyes. I was trembling.

“Take that back,” I hissed.

“I... hate her...”

*“Take it back.”*

She grinned, but her lips could only pull back to reveal the tips of her bloody teeth. Her eyelids fluttered. “I hate... Rey Kenobi...”

The knife was in my hand before I registered what I had done. I reached into Miranda’s mouth, ignoring her feeble bites, and yanked her tongue from between her teeth so it was in my full view. Rage only served to make my movements less smooth and accurate, and my first attempt at slicing off the girl’s tongue nearly succeeded in removing one of my own fingers. She was laughing at me.

I did not permit women to make me a point of amusement.

The blade cut clean through Miss Kemp’s tongue and I held the bloody muscle for a brief moment as more blood spewed from the point of severance to pool in her mouth. She began to convulse and gag, struggling to free herself from between my knees, and I stuffed her tongue back from whence it came. I forced her jaw closed to keep her quiet as she began to aspirate on her own blood—death was imminent. Her eyes rolled back in her head, tears streaming freely down her cheeks.

“Take it back,” I whispered, smearing my bloody hands across her face.

I covered Miranda’s mouth with several strips of duct tape to hasten along her death and seized her left wrist. She was growing paler by the moment but seemed to flush with color when I pinned her hand to the floor and raised the knife high enough for her to see. I smiled and brought down the blade, dislocating the girl’s hand from her forearm just past her wrist.

Cutting her wrists themselves free would be nonsensical. The entire hand made much more sense and would frighten and confuse the little boyfriend all that much more.

Never before had I seen so much gore, even on the night I sliced open Hannah’s stomach. Miranda lay cold and lifeless below me but the stumps continued to bleed profusely. I turned the knife in my grasp to stab her through the left cheek, the same place Poe had defiled my Rey, and patted the corpse with her own severed hand as blood flowed from her mouth.

“You’re leaving a mess,” I chastised. I grasped her by the hair and slammed her head on the floor several times, still incomparably angry. “And you already died on me. Wretch.”

The hands would not remain fresh for long. I rose from Miranda and stomped on her already severely disfigured face for good measure, furious that an entire night of torture had ended so quickly. I was slow to feel strong emotion—I hardly felt a stirring of it within me—but I could not stand idly by while she spewed vitriol regarding something that belonged to *me*. It was unforgivable.

The frenzied murder made cleaning a bit of a nightmare, even for myself. I trembled as I tightly rolled Miranda’s corpse into the blanket, still roiling with violent impulses, and set to the task of wiping each droplet of blood from the carpeting. I’d flung her essence every which way in my haste to dispatch her and my normally obsessive personality was rather put off by the work involved.

But I dutifully performed my work and scanned the room for any mistakes I may have made before leaving with Miranda in my arms. Her face had been bludgeoned beyond recognition so I tenderly held the back of her head as I left the hotel without a word from the desk attendant.

I threw the body into the back seat drove to my next destination: Poe Dameron's home. Though I dearly wished to slit his throat while he was asleep, I would delight in his emotional turmoil much more. I hummed a familiar lullaby my mother would sing to me: *Au Claire de la Lune*, the melody of my many sleepless nights. Of course, she had a tendency to ruin it with her sniffing.

Poe Dameron lived in an elaborate white home with a vast garden in the front yard and tresses akin to those carved into ancient Greek temples. I parked a ways down the street and assembled the hands in a woven picnic basket I frequently brought along when purchasing wine. When they were neatly arranged together, stiff and morbidly cold, I strolled down the street and turned up the cobblestone driveway to the front door of the Dameron household.

It would have a security system, which meant I wouldn't be able to ensure Poe would be the one to see the hands. He would learn soon enough, though. I set them on the porch and walked back to my vehicle to begin the quiet drive home. Rey was waiting for me.

The dead young woman in my backseat was a slight issue. She would be greatly missed and the authorities would doggedly search for her body, which meant I would have to lie low and deny myself my favorite pastime until they stopped sniffing. It would be too dangerous luring vagrants. Miranda's corpse would join the others in my private disposal site, and the police would never know.

Thus, I watched another female body sink into the murky depths of the swamp that evening before returning to my bedroom. There was hardly time to continue playing games with Rey.

I stepped inside the dark room expecting to see her slumbering peacefully beneath the sheets only to find her lying prone on the floor, shivering violently. Hm. Perhaps I had miscalculated her dosage. Combined with the alcohol she would easily rest through the evening and part of the morning.

I approached slowly to stand beside Rey, unbuttoning my shirt and watching fondly as her right eye opened a fraction of an inch to look at me. She was still entirely immobile and had likely collapsed from the bed due to nausea or a random fit, not her own free will. My appetite was piqued.

"I'm already very tired of waiting, Miss Kenobi," I murmured. She preferred gentler tones and was otherwise prone to leaping in fear like a paranoid prey animal. "Will I have to take you by force?"

The woman stared up at me stupidly, her mouth slightly ajar. Mmm. Tempting. But she would be vomiting for much of the evening—unpleasant for my first time raping her—and I wanted her to fight back. Fucking her comatose body wouldn't be satisfying.

The drugs were apparently working a hair *too* well and my victim was covered in sweat. I lifted her languid form from the floor and very carefully changed her clothing into another set of nighttime odds and ends I had in my upper drawer. Her hazy brown eyes roamed across the ceiling during the process and when I had finished and was preparing to tuck her beneath the sheets, she hiccupped.

"So demanding," I sighed, picking up my wastebasket. "Come here. I can't have you inhaling your own vomit. How will I explain such a thing to your mother?"

Rey hiccupped again. Her hips bones taunted me beneath the edge of my green dress shirt. I would pin her down with them; squeeze until I left bruises across her pale skin. It would shift and strain as she tried to struggle away from me. I could draw my knife across that taut flesh and split her open and slip my fingers inside her warm, bloody wound...

I grasped her hair to hold her forward so she could vomit and performed that same task several

times, all the while cleaning her mouth and offering her a mint. She would certainly worry if she woke to the taste of vomit but no memory of doing such.

She had settled into relative silence until I was woken for the third time by her hiccups yet again, and I lazily leaned across her body to prepare the garbage can...

## **My head is bloody, but unbowed.**

### Chapter Notes

get ready for leia to be unlikable soon

My heart was beating in the back of my throat, resonating painfully in my ears. A harsh ringing preceded me achieving hazy consciousness with three-way vision cutting the bedroom into a myriad of shapes I couldn't properly discern. There weren't a lot of colors for me to take in but the dark shades were hard to process and made the throbbing in my mouth intensify tenfold. I hiccupped.

The bed shifted behind me but I was too dazed to care very much. The bathroom was too far away and I was ready to puke up whatever I had drunk the night before. Why the hell couldn't I remember anymore? I wasn't known for being that much of a lightweight and I should've built up a good tolerance to alcohol after all the parties I went to. All my nervousness was probably making me sick.

Fingers gently gathered my hair and it was twisted around a wrist before a hand pressed to the back of my head and urged me toward the edge of the bed. To my relief, there was a garbage can waiting but I couldn't reach it with my weakened arms. The person leaned over me to pick up the can and angled my chin properly to keep me from spilling any vomit on the floor. I hiccupped again and my stomach lurched painfully, ejecting the gross mess of poison.

The room was still very dark so the night wasn't even over yet. I would probably wake once or twice more to puke before I felt good enough to sleep well. That was usual how vomiting after drinking too much worked for me: a few sessions in the bathroom were enough to soothe my stomach.

But the horrible feeling didn't fade in the slightest when I finally stopped. My lips were numb and I couldn't even spit out the puke still sitting in my mouth, which only served to make my nausea worse. Trembling, I weakly collapsed beside my bedmate again and took shallow, rattling breaths. Holy shit. It felt like I was on the brink of death. Every part of me was cold.

The person released my hair and tenderly combed their fingers through it to loosen the knots before rising from the bed and walking around the bed to retrieve the garbage can. I couldn't... remember... who was I with? Was it Poe? Maybe I had gone home with some other random guy.

Whoever it was, they disappeared into the bathroom with the garbage can and I heard the toilet flush. I shuddered miserably with the terrifying knowledge that none of my limbs would move—even twitching a damn finger was impossible. I was lying on my stomach with my face turned toward the bathroom in a pool of my own sweat like some kind of animal. My teeth chattered. Was I going to die?

The shadow reemerged but I'd wasted the rest of my strength. I closed my eyes as they grasped my chin to tilt my face forward and wiped away the leftover vomit. It was a huge relief. They pulled open my jaw with little effort, because I wasn't really in a position to bite, and wiped the inside of my mouth almost entirely clean. My tongue was the only muscle capable of moving and I savored a mint they slipped between my lips, pushing it around my mouth to get rid of the bad taste.

Then the sheets were pulled back and I mewled in displeasure upon being exposed to the cold air, feeling it tug on my skin and instantly raise goosebumps. The stranger laughed to himself and I was lifted off the bed into distinctly male arms, curled against his chest like a sleeping baby. I heard the sheets being yanked off the bed before I was set back down on a dry but naked mattress.

A drawer opened and I heard a distorted voice speak. My ears still hurt.

“I’ve changed you twice already, Rey,” he crooned. “If you sweat any more, I may have to bring you to the hospital.” The drawer shut and he laughed again like it was a joke.

The name was being shredded through a filter caused by the alcohol; I couldn’t for the life of me pinpoint the voice even though it made my heart beat in my throat again. He stood between my knees, turned me on my back, and shimmied my pants off my hips to pull on clean sweatpants. When I blearily opened my eyes his fingers were working through the buttons on my shirt.

The chill got even worse when the shirt fell apart across my torso. I whimpered but my muscles still didn’t respond and the man shushed me. His hand slid around my bare back to hold me so he could get the shirt off me and add that to the pile on the floor. I closed my eyes and nuzzled into his chest without really thinking. His cologne smelled *amazing*.

The man hesitated with both of his arms wrapped around my bare spine and my own arms hanging limply at my sides. I sighed into the warmth of his chest and began to doze off...

One of his hands rose to hold the back of my head to his chest he kissed the top. “Don’t fret, maman. He can’t find you here. It’s just the two of us.”

I passed out again and the memories were gone in a wisp of expensive wine.

“...Rey...”

My fingers twitched beside my head. I felt like I’d been hit by a train.

“...Rey... wake up...”

There was a lot of static in my mind, as if I was a poorly tuned television. My brow furrowed together in irritation and I kept my eyes stubbornly shut. No waking. Not yet.

A hand touched my wrist and I was jolted awake with a wild gasp, rolling over on my side to face the offender. My shoulders trembled when I saw Kylo standing beside the bed with his head cocked curiously and hand still outstretched toward the spot my own hand had been. He was wearing black flannel pajama pants and a grey t-shirt.

*Shit!* Had I really passed out again?!

I groaned and flopped onto my stomach which only served to boil fresh nausea in my gut. My body felt kind of cold and shaky like I had the flu or something instead of a regular hangover. I buried my face deeper into my pillow when another gruesome wave of nausea rippled through me, begging for a visit to the bathroom. There was no way I would risk rolling out of bed with Kylo a foot away.

“You’re becoming my hotel,” I said sourly into the pillow.

Kylo hesitated before he replied like he was waiting for me to mention something. “Yes, it does appear that way. Did you sleep well enough last night, Rey? I went to bed myself soon after you.”

I shrugged. “Good question. All I remember is...” I raised my head and blearily looked up at him, squinting against the morning light. “Well, everything with Poe, and coming here to see you for astronomy, and once again losing my shit after a glass of wine. Sorry, my ‘stuff’ after a glass of wine. Did I really only have one last night or is my memory foggy?”

“You had several but managed to change your own clothing this time.” Kylo smiled but his eyes looked dark. “It seems we don’t accomplish much in the way of scientific progress together.”

“Yeah... sorry. I should probably lay off the wine when I come over here unless you want me to keep passing out and sleeping in your spare room.”

“I don’t mind,” he murmured.

My spine prickled and I began to feel very vulnerable lying in his bed in his house wearing his clothes. Was I making a mistake? How did I know I could trust him? It was probably because of his very attractive appearance and the way he was so self-assured about everything and his intelligence and how he brought me wine and watched me while I watched the television.

A loud vibration on the nightstand roused Kylo’s attention faster than mine and he snatched up my cell phone before I could. To my surprise, he looked at the caller ID before handing it off to me. He sat beside my legs on the bed and didn’t look away when I answered the call.

“Rey?!” cried mom’s terrified voice. “Rey, where are you?!”

All that came out were a few aimless stutters. Mom started harshly berating me and demanding to know where I was when Kylo rolled his eyes and took the phone away, clearing his voice before fixating a smile on his face.

“This is Dr. Kylo Ren,” he said smoothly. “Am I speaking with Mrs. Samantha Rivera?”

I propped myself up on my elbow, mystified. How did he know my mother’s new last name? I kept my dad’s because I wasn’t comfortable being close to Rian that way but I didn’t think it would be visible on the school’s records. That kind of thing was pushed back away from grades and schedules and bills. Mom’s name would be hidden amongst financial aid records and whatnot.

Kylo rose from the bed and began to soothe my mother, pausing for long periods of time to listen to her loud and panicked questions. I could only watch him in awe as he strolled casually around the room like there wasn’t a berserk middle-aged woman shrieking in his ear. At one point he blinked in surprise and burst into laughter, blue eyes briefly flickering to me.

Nearly half an hour had passed before he offered me the phone again. I narrowed my eyes at him and expected the worst from mom when I pressed the phone to my ear.

“Who is *that*?” she whispered in a conspiratorial tone. “Is that where you’ve been going, Rey? For goodness sakes, you’re nineteen years old; I don’t mind if you sleep at your boyfriend’s house! He sounds so very attractive, too—your astronomy professor, right?” She giggled. “Oooh, you’re a chip off the old block for sure! I can’t wait to tell Rian.”

“He is not my boyfriend!” I hissed, turning away from Kylo in embarrassment. “Did you say anything stupid while you two were talking? He was only helping me out and nothing happened.”

“My Rey dating a doctor! I never thought I’d see the day!” She called loudly for Rian, totally ignoring my demands for answers. “I’m putting Rian on the line so you can tell him about your new catch, sweetie! Rian! Rian, get out here! Rey-Rey found—”



Furious, I hung up on her and threw my phone down on the mattress, angrily crossing my arms over my chest. Kylo was sitting next to my legs again and peered over his shoulder curiously at my phone before looking to me with an eyebrow raised. What the hell was he looking at?! I wasn't the one having long, apparently funny discussions with my lunatic of a mother.

"She wasn't inquiring about Poe," Kylo said. "Your sister has apparently kept that a secret for some reason or another. A local girl was murdered last night while you and I were asleep."

Did I... Did I tell him it was Poe who left the bruises...? I didn't remember doing that.

My shoulders loosened. "Are you serious?"

"Of course I'm serious." He shook his head sadly and hung it to hide his face. "Miranda Kemp."

"Miranda is *dead*?"

Kylo's eyes met mine and he looked away quickly, like he couldn't imagine anything worse than her vanishing. "She was taken from the street and two severed hands were discovered on Poe Dameron's porch an hour ago." He touched my knee and I shivered. "I'm so sorry, Rey."

No way. Miranda had not been kidnapped and murdered overnight while I was sleeping off a hangover. I sunk back down into bed and kept my hand over my mouth as tears brimmed in my eyes. Oh, no. She couldn't possibly be... Those kinds of things didn't happen in my town.

But recent events had made me realize anything could happen. Your childhood friends can turn on you in the worst of ways; your little brat of a sister could be a hero; you could be a suppressed genius; or you could wind up in a complicated situation with your astronomy professor. Everything could change in an instant.

Kylo turned away from me to leave and I instinctively grabbed his arm, now sobbing. A strange emotion flashed in his eyes when I touched him but he allowed me to throw my arms around his neck to cry into his shoulder. My wrists hurt from the bruises and my cheek stung from pressing it to his scratchy neck but I didn't care.

Soon his arms were wrapped around my back and he was holding me tightly while I cried about everything: Poe, Kira rescuing me and how I felt like a shitty older sister, Rose being on the other side of the country, Miranda. I couldn't control myself if I tried. The dam had finally burst.

Kylo stroked my hair. "Shh, mon chouchou. Shh."

I didn't understand a damn word he was saying when he broke out the French but it found it comforting. I slumped against him after a few more minutes as my crying tapered down to sniffles and he was humming something quietly. From the way the notes rose and fell, it was a lullaby.

My cell phone vibrated again, much to my irritation. Kylo held me with one arm and leaned back to pick it up, examining the texter before turning the phone to face me.

*It's Poe. We need to talk.*

## Beyond this place of wrath and tears

### Chapter Notes

so in the original draft this chapter was totally different. but when i reread my original story it totally skips poe and jumps ahead to more random crap. i hated it, so i rewrote it, and i like this chapter much more.

Oh no—poor Poe. He had to be so upset and confused. I tapped the call button without thinking, still sniffing and standing under Kylo's looming presence, and smiled a little when Poe picked up.

"Hey," I said, "are you okay?"

"Reybee?" His voice was weak and sad like he'd been crying, too. "I'm so sorry for the other day. Can we please talk?"

Kylo was gazing off into the room like he didn't care about my conversation with Poe. I shifted away from him, feeling like I was doing something wrong, and chewed my nails. Miranda was dead and Poe was really depressed, obviously, and he apologized for what he did. We could talk it out. I'd grown up with the kid and somehow, I was still in love with him. My eyes flickered to my bruised wrist obscured under the limp cuff of Kylo's shirt.

I shrugged, tugging the sleeve down with my thumb. "I don't know, Poe. I'm..." I looked up into Kylo's deep blue eyes and away again. "...I'm kind of busy."

Kylo shifted, eyes narrowing suspiciously.

Poe sighed and hiccupped. "You can trust me. The other day was a mistake. I... I've been in love with you forever, and I didn't want to admit it. Please meet up with me?"

My heart skipped a beat and I lost my voice. Holy shit. Holy. Shit.

"Okay," I said. All common sense went out the window. "We can meet somewhere public."

"No. Come to my house." Poe's voice was harsh, then softened. "Please, Reybee?"

"But... are your parents home?"

Kylo clenched his jaw and ripped the phone out of my hand before Poe could answer. He hung it up and tossed it on the bed, glaring at me like I'd done something wrong. I spluttered and turned to get it back but he grabbed my arm dragged me in front of him again. The bruises were peeking from the sleeve and he lifted my upper arm to push it back to my elbow.

"Forgotten so soon, Rey?" Kylo snapped. He was leaning over to look into my eyes. "Look what that beast did to you. You would willingly be alone with him in an altered emotional state? Are you suicidal?"

"Poe won't hurt me again. It was an accident."

His sharp gaze tightened even more, angry. "An *accident*?" He stepped closer to me and ground his

jaw. “My mother insisted the same—up until her death. Abusers mark their victims quite deliberately, like possessions. It is never an ‘accident.’”

Jesus. Why was he suddenly so pissy? Poe wasn’t an ‘abuser’—he just... loved me a lot. He was overcome by passion.

I tugged free of Kylo’s grasp to cover my wrist. “Well he never hurt me, ever. Or Miranda.”

“He—” Kylo hesitated, like he was afraid to speak, then his throat bobbed. “This is the first phase, and you will be his first victim. I know, because... because of my father. If you consent to being alone with him, he will harm you.”

“He’s my best friend.” I wandered away, searching for my clothes. “I have to go to him.”

There was silence, then: “No. I won’t allow it.”

I blinked in surprise and looked over my shoulder at Kylo. He was standing in the doorway with a peculiar look on his face. Stress. I’d never seen him anxious before and I didn’t know what to make of it. He stared back at me and took a step to block the door completely.

Poe wasn’t some psycho. I loved him. I’d never love an abuser.

But I knew Kylo was right in my heart of hearts. If Poe just wanted to talk, he’d meet me in public. He tried to assault me yesterday and he was obviously heartbroken about Miranda. His emotions were unstable and chaotic and if we were alone...

My astronomy professor nodded towards my phone on the bed. “The two of you can meet here. I will supervise.” He ran a hand through his black hair and scowled. “Tonight. Do not tell him who I am, my address, or the nature of our relationship.”

Our relationship? I blinked at Kylo and nodded quickly. Relationship? Us?!

My phone started vibrating on the bed and Kylo scooped it up before I’d even reacted. He slipped it in his pocket and I didn’t dare question him. I felt frozen there in the middle of the bedroom. So he *did* care about me. He was trying to protect me from harm, after all. His mom had been abused and he didn’t want the same thing happening to me. Maybe I’d been wrong about his cold nonchalance.

“You don’t have to babysit us,” I said meekly.

He rolled his eyes and motioned for me to follow him. “I’m a college professor, Rey. I’m essentially a glorified babysitter already. Come—we’ll have breakfast and I’ll call your mother.”

“Yeah, she’s probably worried after what happened.” I hurried after him, forgetting my clothes. “Um... what were you humming to me, anyway?”

We went downstairs. Kylo hadn’t started his sitcoms yet, as it was only ten A.M., and the house felt cold and still. I skittered after him into the kitchen and he gestured for me to sit at the island while he made breakfast. Reticent, I did what was implied, and crossed my fingers on the granite.

Kylo took my phone out to respond to Poe with a text before dropping it back in his pocket. I stared, clenching my hands, and he gathered pots and pans like nothing was out of the ordinary.

“*Au Claire de la Lune*,” he said after a beat. “It’s a French lullaby my mother sang to me. ‘By the Light of the Moon.’”

“Oh. It sounded pretty.”

“Simple, but quite beautiful.” His blue eyes roamed to mine.

We had pancakes and eggs and it was delicious. Kylo called my mother to put her at ease and I talked to her, too, saddened by Miranda’s death. She didn’t deserve it. She’d been at volleyball practice and someone just scooped her up and killed her. At least, that was the assumption. If she didn’t have her hands anymore, she was most likely dead in a ditch.

Around eleven the sitcoms began in the living room. I was sitting at the table with Kylo and he abruptly rose and walked out to the living room to watch them. He didn’t give me a second glance as he settled into his black couch and trained his gaze on *Friends*. Odd. He hadn’t been happy when I came at one and interrupted his watching. It had to happen between eleven and two in the afternoon.

I tentatively stepped into his living room. Kylo gestured vaguely for me to approach and I did so, slipping around the edge of the couch to sit a foot away from him. He kept watching TV, unblinking.

Dumb as I was, I wasn’t dumb enough to interrupt again. I suppressed my giggles and curled my legs underneath me. Kylo and I had matching clothes on. His were huge on me. The sitcom went to commercial break around noon and he glanced at me, smiling.

“Mr. Dameron will join us after dark, around six o’clock. Is that satisfactory?”

I nodded. “Sure.” Then I lifted my arms to flop the sleeves around. “Are my clothes okay?”

“Yes—but you vomited on them.”

“...Oh. Whoops.” I wrung my hands, nervous. “Guess I should skip the wine, huh?”

Kylo came close to laughing but just nodded and shrugged. “Probably. You’re a bit of a lightweight. I kept your mouth as clean as possible.”

Memories leaked back. Yeah, he did. I remembered pushing the mint around my mouth and his soft voice trying to soothe me. My chest fluttered.

“I’m such a moron,” I mumbled. “I’m so sorry.”

The sitcom began again. Kylo didn’t look at it, though, opting to stare at me instead. His blue eyes swept down my body to my feet, and he tentatively reached out to brush the soles. I swallowed hard and nudged closer and he silently curled his long fingers around one foot. His skin was cool and soft but his fingertips felt rough.

He drew a short nail down the center of my foot’s sole. “I don’t mind. I enjoy your company.” His eyes flickered to mine. “Would you like to get dressed?”

My skin tingled along the line he drew and heat flushed to my cheeks.

“Uh... yeah. I hate putting you out like this.”

Kylo ran his fingers along my toes. “You do not bother me in the least, Rey.”

We went upstairs, forsaking his sitcom. Kylo kept his hands in his pockets on our way to the spare bedroom and wandered inside. Vomit or not, I’d wear my clothes home.

They were hanging up in the closet and looked and smelled clean. I beamed and took down my jeans and t-shirt—my bra was still on, thank God—and turned to thank Kylo. But I was alone in the bedroom with the rumpled sheets and my fresh clothes. I frowned and changed right there, peering out of the door into the hallway, then stepped out and called his name.

It was dark and quiet, only illuminated by sunlight from the two windows. I pattered to Kylo's bedroom and hesitantly knocked on the door.

"Come in," he called.

The room felt familiar. I slipped inside and looked around and shut it behind me. Grey sheets, white ceiling, tan carpets. There was a balcony off to the left that overlooked the dark forest lining Kylo's property and I could see a small pond or swamp in the distance. I squinted and wandered towards the sliding glass door, ignoring Kylo adjusting his belt.

"Wow," I breathed. "This is so cool."

There was a big telescope sitting out of the porch, too, and I looked up at the sky through the glass. The stars were bright when I left at night but they had to be amazing facing away from the house. Right now the sun was climbing in the sky and spilling delicate light across the misty trees. It was like a dream.

Kylo stepped up next to me, tilting his head, gazing across the canopy. "The sky is very clear here. My only neighbors are the squirrels and deer."

"Do you hunt?" I asked vaguely, still looking out the door. Lots of people did. Rian did.

He laughed. "Not deer."

"Oh. Pheasant?" I glanced up and smiled. "Rian went on a moose hunt in Maine a few years ago. It was so expensive but he got a ton of meat out of it."

"...Yes, I hunt pheasant. Shall we go back downstairs? Perhaps get some work done?"

That was the entire reason I was here. I nodded and we went back to the living room to pore over calculus and some slides from Kylo's high-level classes.

The day passed quickly. We went for a walk around three through the woods behind his home, right towards the pond. I shivered and dipped my hands in my pockets as we strolled down the well-worn path. Kylo seemed unaffected by the cold and stared straight ahead.

"Can you fish in the pond?" I asked.

His eyes wandered down to me and he smirked. "No. It's a swamp."

Eww. Gross. I made a repulsed face and his smiled widened. He tugged my hood over my head and nudged my arm with his.

"You're trembling, Rey. Shall we go back?"

"No, I'm okay." I yawned, shrugging. "I need some fresh air."

We arrived at the swamp a few minutes later. It didn't look like much, just ooze and muck ringed by cattails. The sun was beginning to set and frogs were already calling out to potential mates. I studied the murky water and stepped a foot closer to the edge of the bank. It was pretty deep. I

squinted—was something in the depths?—and inched forward...

My foot slipped on a sheet of ice and I shrieked as I nearly took a plunge into the icy cold swamp. But Kylo had fast reflexes and he wrapped an arm around my waist just before I toppled in. He swung me away from the water and set me back on my feet, laughing while I shivered and squirmed away from him. I glared up into his blue eyes and he pressed his lips together. He was still smirking.

“You tripped over nothing. Impressive.”

I huffed. “No! There was ice!”

“Of course, Miss Kenobi.” He nodded towards his house off in the distance. “Let’s go back and decide where we’ll be picking up your little friend.”

My phone vibrated in Kylo’s pocket on our way back. I arched on my tiptoes to read while we walked and he pushed me away by my face, holding me at arm’s length. His eyes were wide and scanning something on the screen and his throat bobbed. I growled under my breath and watched his thumb moved across the screen, typing something one-handed.

He glanced at me. “Mr. Dameron is quite dogged in his pursuit of you. He requested you visit his home again and sent a nice photo.”

“Oh god... it’s not his dick, is it?”

Kylo released me and turned the phone to show me the picture. It was me in my red dress from the party two nights ago when Poe attacked me. I was lying on the bed, though; his bed, passed out. I spluttered nervously and snatched my phone to send back an angry text and delete the picture. What his damn problem?!

We resumed walking. Kylo had his hands in his pockets and kept clenching his jaw.

“Nevermind,” I snapped, “I don’t want to see him, anyway.”

“I do.”

I looked up to find Kylo’s blue eyes were vacant and cold. He didn’t react to my nervous laugh.

“He’s just being—”

His long fingers closed around my jaw, tilting my chin so I met his gaze. I blinked and felt my phone vibrate as Poe texted me back. Darkness was descending faster and faster and the crickets were chirping now. I swallowed hard.

Kylo searched my eyes for a moment, then smiled. “You’re so very gullible, Miss Kenobi. So trusting... unwilling to see the dark side of other people.” He shifted his grip to draw his thumb across my lips, licking his. “Lonely, too—craving attention and affection and seeking it no matter the risk.”

I stared up at him. All I could see were his mesmerizing irises. He could see right through me.

The wildlife continued their nighttime chatter as Kylo tugged lightly on my jaw to bring me on my tiptoes, leaning down to kiss me chastely on the lips for a few seconds. My eyes widened for a fraction of a second before I remembered to close them and I teetered closer, blindly reaching for his jacket. But he released a moment later and kept walking like nothing happened.

My pulse raced as I scurried after him, hovering back a few steps. I was unsure of Kylo but I was terrified of being alone in the woods. He was safe. Right?

## And what shoulder, & what art,

### Chapter Notes

ok here's where leia becomes a piece of shit  
U WERE WARNED THAT EVERYONE SUCKssss

*The Donator's boisterous laughter echoed in the halls, reaching me in my small bedroom.*

*The wallpaper was a faded pink and torn in several places to reveal the filthy wall underneath. I sat quietly in my small bed amidst neatly made blue bed sheets meant to offset the feminine appeal of my walls that permeated all the way to the ornate and old dresser. There was little else of interest. It was plain, the product of a blue collar worker's measly income.*

*I was reading one of my mother's favorite French books from her own childhood. She had taught me the language early on and I was nearly proficient at age seven, which did little to earn me new friends at my school. They mostly ridiculed me for the Donator's alcoholism and my mother's ancestry. The French were not well-accepted in rural Alabama.*

*Thankfully, I picked up mother's accent rather than her husband's. It would have helped me blend better with the other children if I carried a Southern drawl but I had the sharp and easy French manner of speaking that made me quite distinct amongst my peers. Children could be very cruel. It convinced me at a young age that I would never create such a foul creature if I could help it.*

*My door creaked open and I glanced up to see my mother's mascara-streaked face peering inside. She closed her long fingernails around the chipped door and smiled. She was beautiful. I imagined she had been much more appealing during her younger days before she met the Donator.*

*Maman was wearing her elegant pink nightgown and I immediately realized what she was pursuing. I had been born with a conscience and the ability to feel fear. I shrank away from her, clutching the book tightly to my chest as my small heart began to patter in terror. Those reactions would die in several years and an empty husk would be left behind. I was a product of my environment.*

*Maman smelled of flowers. She gently shut the door as to not rouse the Donator's suspicion and slipped beneath my sheets, disturbing the bed I had worked so diligently to perfect. I bit my lower lip in anger but did not say a word to her. She would sob, and he would come running and beat me.*

*"Come, Ben," she crooned in her thick accent that was jarred from a recent crying fit. "Maman is lonely and sad. Be a good boy and comfort me."*

My eyes snapped open. I was leaning over the sink in my restroom, pouring sweat. I ran a hand through my hair and squeezed my eyes shut as a strangled scream rattled in my lungs, desperate to alert Rey of my condition. More preparations were needed.

The boy needed to die first. Yes. Kill the abuser. Kill him, protect maman. She would smile and thank me and I would finally be able to tolerate her touch. I just wanted her to love me.

Unfamiliar fear trickled through my bones, driving me to grope about my medicine cabinet for my



only relief. The Rohypnol was mislabeled as Tylenol but I snatched up the vial of liquid GHB instead. Trembling, I administered a single drop to my tongue, and took deep, painful breaths. Little Rey was starting her vehicle outside, but I didn't want to risk—

A scream tore violently from my throat and resonated through my silent, empty home. I sank to the floor, clutching my head, and screamed again.

“Please stop, maman,” I begged. I pulled my hair and shuddered, struggling to fold in on myself; hiding from her touch. “STOP!”

Weak—all these emotions made me weak. Sobbing, fraying, I swallowed another hit of GHB and fervently wished that I could crawl out of my flesh and leave my damaged body behind me. Rey. Maman... I'd decapitate her, too. Poisonous *bitch*. Fucking whore. I'd...

I slackened as the GHB coursed through my veins and the memories sifted into the back of my mind. Sighing, I relaxed against my bathtub, still wracked with tremors. I'd allow Rey to keep her head. Of course I would. She was mine, mine, mine. She'd understand after I slit Mr. Dameron's throat. She'd come to appreciate the way I'd paint her pale skin with bruises and cuts.

*Maman wrapped an arm around my head to brush my hair with her nails and smiled into my temple. Her other hand was down my pants. She shushed me gently each time I whimpered or the bed creaked.*

*“You're such a good boy, Ben.”*

The room spun. I got to my feet to wash the tears from my cheeks and clenched my jaw. I'd give maman what she deserved.

## Looms but the Horror of the shade,

### Chapter Notes

thoroughly enjoying rewriting this

It took a long time for Kylo to join me in my car. He had changed into jeans and had his black trench coat on. His expression was odd. Strained, kind of. I smiled faintly as he slipped into the back seat and he smiled back with just as little emotion. Maybe right now wasn't the best time to ask him why he kissed me. He already wasn't happy about Poe coming over.

"You can sit up front," I laughed, shifting into reverse.

"Mr. Dameron will prefer that seat." Kylo glared out the window. "Let's get this overwith."

Eek. Okay.

It was dark out now. We drove silently down the road through the canopy of trees and stopped at an abandoned gas station a few miles down the road. Poe was standing there by one of the rusty pumps, scrolling through his phone. Kylo insisted that someone drop him off and said he'd return him home later on. Dr. Ren was awfully suspicious.

I beamed at the sight of Poe and hopped out of the car to greet him. Kylo watched from the backseat as Poe scooped me up and twirled me through the air. He brushed back my hair and suddenly kissed me on the lips. My heart skipped a beat and I stared up at him.

"I'm sorry for the other night, Reybee." He smiled and kissed my forehead. "It won't happen again."

At first I wanted to forget it all, but I thought of Kylo's words. I drew away from Poe's arms and shifted my jaw. Gullible... seeking attention and affection no matter the cost.

I turned back to the car. "Let's go."

Poe slid into the passenger seat and glanced back at Kylo. "Who's this, Reybee?"

Kylo stared silently back at him. I shifted into drive and pulled out of the parking lot.

"My... friend," I said. "He just wanted to, uh... make sure we're okay."

Poe laughed and once-overed Kylo. "Alright, whatever." Then he looked to me and touched my free hand on my thigh. "Can we go back to my house after this? I was hoping for more privacy."

"I'm sure you were," Kylo said acidly.

We were all quiet on the short drive back. Kylo followed behind Poe and me on our way into the house and I kept shrugging away from his touch. I kept thinking of what my professor had said right before kissing me. He was right. I was way too forgiving; way too willing to ignore mistreatment in the small hope that someone would love me. But I was better than that.

The house was dark and quiet. I felt increasingly awkward being alone with two men and sat on the couch while Kylo turned on the lights and went to get water for us. Poe sat beside me and wrapped an arm around my shoulders as he looked around the room.

“How’d you meet this guy?” he muttered. “He’s creepy.”

I rolled my eyes. “He’s kind of weird but he’s nice. What do you want to talk about?”

Poe shifted forward, clasping his hands between his knees. “Well... Miranda’s gone. I still haven’t processed it, but...” His eyes flickered to mine. “I know I want you, Reybee. And the other night—that was a total accident. I was just mad when I busted into your house, too. Crime of passion, y’know?”

Kylo came back with two glasses of water. I thanked him and he pointedly sat in the chair right across from the couch to stare at us. Poe tried to shift his shoulders to make our conversation more private. Both of us took a sip of our water without a second thought. Kylo tapped his fingers.

I peeked around Poe. “Um, Kylo, can we have some privacy?”

“No.” He glared at Poe. “Drink your water, Rey. You look dehydrated.”

“Reybee, this is stupid,” Poe said. “Let’s just go to my place.”

He stood, tugging me, and Kylo stood up stiffly. He was a bit taller than Poe and ten times as intimidating. Poe eyed him and sat down beside me again.

“The two of you will not be left alone.” Kylo crossed over to us and grabbed my arm to push back my sleeve, exposing my bruised wrist. “Or have you forgotten what you did, Mr. Dameron?”

Poe drank more water, shaking his head. “It was an accident. Besides, Reybee’s always wanted to have sex with me. I figured she was playing along when she said no.”

I hastily tugged my sleeves back down as Kylo sat on the coffee table to fixate his sharp blue eyes on my friend. Nervous, I guzzled my water as well and noticed a faint salty taste. Poe hadn’t made a mistake. He came to my house with the intention of raping me. Kylo was right. Poe saw me as a victim, and this was the first phase of him ruining my life.

Annoyed, I shook my head. “I was crying and begged you to stop.”

“Come on, Reybee,” Poe laughed, reaching for my hand.

Kylo snagged his wrist before it reached me and shoved it back in Poe’s lap. He looked furious.

“Don’t touch her.” His voice was low, threatening. “Drink your water, Mr. Dameron.”

The house was still. Poe did what Kylo commanded, maybe more afraid of him than I was, and I polished off my own water. A strange sensation rippled through my muscles and I began to feel pleasantly relaxed. I yawned and noticed Poe’s shoulders relax, too.

Kylo left to get us more water. Poe touched my knee when he left the room and we started chatting about anything and everything and I decided it was okay that he tried to rape me in my own home. I tugged back my sleeves so we could look at my bruises together.

More water came. I felt increasingly thirsty and drank it all within a few minutes. Poe did, too, and the room twirled like a carnival ride. His fingers slid to the inside of my thigh and I moved closer,

willing them between my legs, hoping he would touch me...

Then we were dragged apart. Kylo was holding my arm and pushed another glass of water on me. He smiled as I giggled and drank it all, stumbling, and I turned to see Poe crawling off the couch. I was so warm and happy—I peered into Kylo’s blue eyes and pressed closer to him, arching on my tiptoes. All I wanted was to touch him and feel his skin under my fingertips.

“Something wrong, mon chouchou?” he murmured.

“Kiss me.”

He smiled and I watched him grab Poe by the hair. “Soon. Why don’t we go for a walk?”

Hm. Okay. I shrugged and followed, laughing along with Poe as Kylo dragged him towards the basement door. He was thrown inside the darkness and tumbled down the stairs, but Kylo scooped me up bridal style to carry me down. I kissed the side of his mouth and he set me down on my feet on the dusty floor to kiss me back, slipping his tongue in my mouth. Poe was a few feet away, cackling.

Kylo broke our kiss, holding my hands tightly. “Come sit with me, Rey.” He turned, smiling, blue eyes glowing in the darkness. “Come see what will happen to those who harm you.”

I smiled and teetered after him. Okie dokie.

Poe laughed as Kylo dragged him towards a dirty mattress covered in maroon stains. I yawned again and looked around the room with mild curiosity, admiring the chains hanging from the walls and noting the odd smell. My professor dropped Poe on the mattress and I wandered closer to sit beside it, resting my chin in my palm. Hmm. It was like a movie.

The basement was dark and dank. Kylo leaned across Poe’s back and I watched him unbutton his jeans and slide the zipper down. I cocked my head.

Kylo leaned back and slipped a condom out of his pocket. “If Mr. Dameron would like to be a rapist—he should embrace the experience himself.” He reached in his jeans and I watched his hand pump back and forth. He gazed at me hungrily. “Watch, my love. This is for you.”

It didn’t feel real. I was flying high, totally at ease and happy being where I was as Kylo jerked forward to penetrate Poe. Poe groaned but didn’t resist as he was violently assaulted on the filthy mattress. I blinked and stared at the scene before me and had the urge to laugh again. My eyes traced Kylo’s movements and I noticed he was staring at me while he flexed inside Poe. He smiled, panting.

I watched him draw away and throw the condom into the darkness. He sat back to force Poe to go down on him, threading his long fingers in my friend’s hair. It didn’t bother me. I didn’t know why.

His blue eyes rolled back and he grunted to completion in Poe’s mouth. I kept watching, feeling oddly aroused, until Kylo drew a sheathed knife from beneath the mattress. He bit the hilt to yank off the sheath and I saw it was covered in dried blood.

Kylo rocked Poe’s mouth on his dick, panting. “For you, Rey.”

The knife hissed across the back of Poe’s neck. His body instantly went limp and he collapsed on the mattress. Blood ran over his collarbones and Kylo shoved him away, tucking himself back in his pants. I squinted and crept closer to Poe but Kylo dragged me from the floor and shoved the

knife in my face. It was huge, like a meat cleaver, and covered in blood and guts.

“Do you like it?” he whispered.

I shrugged. “Sure. Looks like a knife.”

He tightened his grip. “I’d like to plunge it into your belly, but... your death would be a problem. Perhaps something else will suffice.”

“Okie dokie!”

We left Poe’s body in the basement. Kylo led me upstairs to his bedroom and gave me more water to drink, making my head spin even more. He hummed under his breath and instead of going to the bed, we went to his walk-in closet. I frowned when he opened the door to reveal a bunch of blankets and pillows on the floor. The red nightgown was there, too, and a portable CD player.

Kylo tossed the knife into the darkness and pushed me down to my knees. It was soft. I squirmed into the sheets as he closed the door so just a sliver of light remained.

He loomed over me. “Put the gown on.”

I clicked my tongue and yanked off my clothes to do what he asked. Kylo knelt, too, and clicked the CD player so a familiar tune began echoing in the closet. It was soft and light. ‘Au Claire de la Lune.’

“Hey!” I crowed. “This is that lullaby!”

He watched me strip and instructed me to take off my bra and panties. I was wasted so I did it. The gown was too long, clearly meant for someone taller, but I knew Kylo liked it.

His lean fingers snapped in front of my eyes, scattering colors. “How fucked up are you?”

“Fucked up,” I giggled. “I don’t remember my last name.”

“Perfect.”

Kylo’s belt slithered from his pants and he smacked the leather together. I laid on my back and he knelt between my legs to tie it around my neck. It was tight. I swallowed and it bit my throat.

“Bien, maman.” He twisted the excess of the belt around his wrist and tugged, making me cough. “Do you like that?”

“Y-Yes.”

“Are you pleased with me? Happy that I killed Han?”

Han? Who was Han? I just shrugged and nodded and yelped when Kylo yanked on the belt. His glittering eyes drank in my writhing movements.

“Good, maman. Good.” He laid beside me amongst the pillows and pulled a blanket over us. “He won’t hurt us again. I’ll protect you.”

I nuzzled under his chin and curled my hands into his chest. “I love you.”

Kylo’s breath caught and he kissed the top of my head, making no move to move my hands. He shifted down to kiss my bruised wrists but his eyes looked a thousand miles away. His hooded blue

eyes studied my throat as the belt rose and fell with each breath. God, he was hot. I wanted him so badly.

“Can we...?” I stared into his eyes, nervous. “Can we have sex?”

He panted like he was nervous, too, but that made no sense. His eyes were wide and scared.

“No, maman.” Kylo shrank away, trembling. “Please don’t touch me again.”

“Oh—no!” I lifted my hands like they were on fire and shook my head quickly. “I won’t! I’m so sorry. I don’t want to hurt you.”

Then a surprised flicker echoed in his irises and he furrowed his eyebrows. I wanted nothing more than to squirm closer but I wouldn’t if it made him uncomfortable. Why was he so shocked?

Kylo swallowed hard. “...Brush my hair, please?”

The lullaby continued playing around us. I nodded emphatically and drew him into my bosom, careful to avoid stimulating him in any other way. Kylo shivered for a moment but relaxed as I drew my fingers through his thick black hair. He wrapped his arms around me like a sad child and nuzzled closer. I was almost naked with this adult man who wanted me to brush his hair and called me ‘maman;’ whatever that meant. But I was wasted and happy.

Then I felt Kylo’s fingers work through the belt and free my throat. He tossed it away and trembled when I touched his scalp again but slowed when I murmured to him. He clung to me like he might drown if he let go. I wanted nothing more than to shower him with affection and attention.

“...You love me?” he asked after some silence.

I nodded. “Yes. Of course I do.”

He pushed up the nightgown and nuzzled his head underneath. Before I could question it, I felt his soft lips on my nipple, pulling and suckling. Confused, I grasped the back of his head and squirmed.

“I love you, maman,” Kylo whispered between suckling. He drew me closer and kept going, eager. “Feed me.”

“Well there’s no milk—”

Kylo squeezed my breast a few times until I felt fluid leak out. My eyes widened when he groaned and lapped it up, continuing to grope my breast until more seeped into his mouth. He stroked my nipple with his thumb and kept at it until I was too sensitive for it to continue.

“Thank you,” he whispered, gazing up into my eyes.

We fell asleep in the closet, quiet and calm.

# And yet the menace of the years

## Chapter Notes

he be goin craaaazy

also kylo (in this) is a sexual sadist (duh) so he depends on pain and suffering to achieve gratification. he cannot without it. this is NOT the same as consensual imagined situations between adults (like the bdsm community). don't get the two twisted!

Everything felt like a dream in the morning.

I woke up in Kylo's closet with the red nightgown on, whimpering and clutching my head. Fuck. The CD had turned off and he was nowhere to be seen, but he'd closed the door when he left me. I dragged it open and crawled out to the bedroom. I didn't feel as screwed up as I did with a hangover but something wasn't right. I barely remembered the previous night.

Groaning, I staggered into his bathroom to take a shower. Somehow there was a clean pair of panties and my clothes from two days ago. I hopped in and washed out the dirt and sweat, dressed, and wandered into the hall to find my astronomy professor. Poe wanted to see me.

Voices drifted from downstairs. I toddled down to find Kylo on the couch with orange juice, watching sitcoms. My eyes shifted to the clock—yup, 11:30am. His usual time.

He wasn't dressed; just wearing sweatpants and a black t-shirt. His eyes were vacant and dark until they fell upon me and lit up. I smiled and expected cold indifference but Kylo rose from the couch and loomed over me to give me a passionate kiss, tongue and all. Squeaking, I stepped back as he yanked my slim frame closer to his. Okay. Things had changed.

"Good morning," he murmured. His fingers fanned across my butt. "How did you sleep?"

I shrugged. "Um, okay. Why was I in your closet? And where's Poe?"

"I brought him home." Kylo squeezed my cheek and raised an eyebrow. "You wandered into the closet and we fell asleep. I apologize, mon amour. How can I make it better?"

Poe went home? We barely talked. I frowned and Kylo kissed my forehead. Jeez, he was suddenly really affectionate. I had a bad feeling in my gut.

I slipped away. "I'm okay. Uh... I'm going home."

"So soon?" He hooked his fingertips over the hem of my jeans and yanked me back. "Can I get you something? Water, perhaps?"

My thoughts drifted to the previous night. Water... he gave Poe and I a lot of water. I shook my head and squirmed away again, fingering my keys.

"No thanks," I said. "I'll text you."

Kylo watched me leave with a blank expression. I waved and headed home to change into new clothes and see what was up with Poe and Rose. She'd be home from Florida soon.

When I was free of Kylo's oppressive presence, I realized I didn't want to go back to his house. I showered again at my house and reflected on our confusing night that I could hardly recall. He was doing something to me. I knew it. And I needed to do what he said and stop seeking affection and attention no matter the cost. It would come back to haunt me.

Time drifted by. A week passed before mom burst into my room telling me Poe had disappeared, too. I had blocked Kylo at that point and was afraid to ask him if he knew anything. The news didn't do much to me, anyway—Poe was an asshole. Maybe he deserved it.

Another week went by and Rose came home. We shrieked and hung out all the time but I didn't tell her about Kylo. She was tanned from her vacation and the snow began to fall right when she came back. I had no clue what would happen with my astronomy classes and I didn't care. It was winter break so I had an excuse to avoid my weird relationship with him.

Rose and I went to a party on New Year's Eve. We pregame at my house because mom and Rian weren't home, then headed out to Ulysses Smith's house. It was the new party house.

I laughed as we stumbled up the steps. Rose pulled me inside to get me another beer and I whirled around, closing my eyes. Being drunk with Kylo felt way different.

Boys descended on Rose like always. I tossed back a beer and wandered off to watch a movie in the living room. Fuck men. Poe was a creep, and so was Kylo. But my emotions dissolved the more I drank and soon I was unblocking him in a corner and dialing his phone number.

He answered instantly. "Hello, ma chérie."

"Hey," I slurred. "Uhhh... 'Sup?"

"Not much. You sound drunk." He sighed. "Shall I collect you?"

I squinted. "Yeah, I'll send the address."

"Excellent."

So I texted Kylo the address of Ulysses's house and leaned back on the couch. Poe was gone, so he wouldn't try to fuck me anymore. Miranda was dead, so I couldn't feel jealous. I frowned at the ceiling, piecing together the puzzle slices in my head. Poe and Miranda were dead. My friends. Poe hurt me, and Miranda did in a way. So...

Perplexed, I wandered by the door outside. The black Audi pulled up and I texted Rose to let her know I'd be going out. I slipped into the passenger seat and glared at Kylo.

He was still hot, two weeks later. He smiled and pulled away from the house and I smiled back despite myself. He'd shaved his beard.

"You seem drunk," Kylo murmured. "Sleeping over?"

I shook my head. "No! I wanted to yell at you!"

"Oh, no. What for, mere?"

"You did things to me in your closet. It was rude." I reddened. "And what are maman and mere?"



We returned to his house. Kylo left the car and helped me out and we staggered to the porch. Crickets called to me with each step and I laughed and pressed closer to him. Eh, I didn't care about the names. They were French nicknames so whatever. I hummed to myself as Kylo opened the door and swung inside his cold, quiet house.

He locked the door behind us and descended upon me. I laughed when I felt his lips on the back of my neck and pressed into his body behind mine. Kylo groaned and slipped his fingers up my shirt.

"Thirsty?" he cooed.

"OH, yes. I've had a lot to drink."

Kylo abandoned me and went to the kitchen to get me a glass of water. I remembered being fucked up the last time I took a drink from him but I wasn't entirely sure if it had happened. I sank into his couch and turned on the TV, lounging lazily and watching *Friends*. Maybe I was messed up the last time. Poe had visited, emotions were high. Whatever.

He returned and pushed the water on me. I drank back half, but he encouraged me to finish. My head swam as Kylo drew me up from the couch and gave me a gentle kiss. I leaned into his lips and grasped the front of his shirt but he pushed me away and squeezed my hands.

"Good girl." He tugged me towards the stairs. "Come."

Sure. We went upstairs past the spare room to his bedroom and I giggled along the way. Kylo locked his bedroom door when we slipped inside and he was on me again, sliding his hands through my hair and slipping his tongue in my mouth. I whimpered and returned the gesture as well as I could while he redirected me towards the closet. My limbs were liquefying. The water...

"I've missed you, Rey." Kylo yanked open the door and pushed me to my knees.

I nodded and crept into the blankets. "Me too."

"Turn the CD on, please."

Obedient, I pressed a finger to the play button. 'Au Claire de la Lune' drifted through the closet and Kylo descended, crawling on top of me. I obediently laid back and smiled up at him.

He withdrew a weird vial from his pocket and dripped some on his tongue. He pushed up my shirt to expose my breasts and tugged one free of my bra.

"Um ..." I shook my head, trying to get away. "I don't want—"

Kylo dipped his head, anyway, and began pulling from my nipple. I didn't even have very big boobs but I whimpered and squirmed into his long, lean body. He pushed his head under my shirt and laid beside me to take long suckling pulls from each breast while I writhed against him. I listened to the lullaby and hummed along while his lips stroked along my nipple.

My anxiety began to grow, even under the influence of alcohol and whatever was in the water. I tried to pull away and he leaned back for a second like he was going to let go. I shivered as he yanked off my shirt and propped my breasts up on the underwires of my bra. Kylo pinned my hands beside my head and went right back to sucking my nipple. It was starting to hurt.

I didn't like being pinned down, either. Anxious, I tried to push my knees into his stomach to push him off, but he was too heavy and stiff for me to move him. The lullaby kept drifting through the dark closet as my struggle with Kylo quickly grew more desperate.

“S-Stop!” I finally stammered. “I don’t like this!”

“No?” He exerted his weight between my legs and released my hands to thread his fingers through my hair and yank back, forcing me to look up at him. “But I took medication to avoid killing you when we’re through. Don’t you appreciate that?”

Fear was buzzing through my body but the memories weren’t sticking. I stared into Kylo’s eerie blue eyes and he kissed me, rolling my bottom lip through his teeth and tugging on it. Stunned into silence, I could only lie there as he flexed his hips between my legs and buried his face in my neck. My hands lay on the floor beside me with a vague tremor wracking them.

Nothing made sense. Was I having a nightmare? The closet spun and I swallowed hard and squeezed my eyes shut. It had to be the booze.

Kylo sighed and leaned back on his calves after a while, raising an eyebrow. “Well this is disappointing. I was looking forward to overpowering you. Are you frightened?”

I nodded once, sharply. My heart hammered in my ears.

“Are you a virgin?” he murmured, tilting his head.

“...Yes.”

“Ooh. I see.” Kylo reached into his back pocket and flicked free a thick pocket knife with a serrated blade. He drew his tongue along the smooth edge, smiling at me. “Do you know what I’m going to do to you, *mon chou*?”

Tears prickled in my eyes and I shook my head, just once again. He looked like a blue-eyed demon.

Kylo abruptly sliced through the front of my bra and I jerked in fear as it fell apart across my chest. He traced the blunt edge of the knife down my sternum and shivering stomach, then pressed the tip just below my belly button. His free fingers worked through the button and zipper of my jeans.

“That depends on birth control.” His eyes flickered to mine. “Are you on birth control?”

One nod.

“Ah. In *that* case...” Kylo used both hands to tug my jeans past my hips but left my panties on. “I am going to fuck you from behind without a condom—and I will thoroughly enjoy splitting you open.” He smiled and threw my jeans into the darkness. “If we’re lucky, you may even bleed.”

Silence stretched through the closet. Kylo’s smile faded into a deep scowl for some reason. I wasn’t moving and barely breathing or blinking. I was frozen solid.

He pressed his tongue inside his cheek, jaw shifting. “I’m going to rape you, Miss Kenobi.”

I still didn’t react. My head was spinning and I felt like I was floating out of my body.

Kylo flipped the knife in his grip and nicked the edge of my ribs with the very tip. I started from the sharp pain but continued to stare at him, petrified, as he split my skin open several inches down my ribcage. It rolled across each protuberance until he brought it up to his mouth to slip the blood off with his tightened lips. The wound began weeping down the side of my body onto the blankets.

“Fight back,” he snapped.

It throbbed like a cat scratch. Kylo glared at me and leaned down to lap up the blood, smearing it

across his lips and keeping his icy eyes on mine. I just stared back.

He growled angrily and stabbed the knife into the floor right next to my hip. My breath caught as he got to his feet and flung the closet door open, stalking out into his bedroom. I laid there, panting in terror, until the mixture of alcohol and drugged water finally dragged me into darkness.

## Could twist the sinews of thy heart?

### Chapter Notes

i should update something else but this is also fun to write soooo

*“Ben, your lunch is ready!”*

*It was another boiling afternoon in Alabama and the neighbor’s ankle-biting dog was being particularly loud, shrieking madly at passerby. I made a mental note to kill the creature after night had fallen and unwillingly left my Stephen Hawking novel to hurry downstairs. My mother’s voice had a strong pull on me. I was hapless, eager to establish a viable parent.*

*Leia was already sitting at the table in a chair adjacent to mine, twirling a lock of her long brown hair around a finger while she studied the newspaper. She glanced up to acknowledge my arrival—I was ten years old and still rather small for my age.*

*The other children dearly loved to torment me. I’d arrived home from school covered in bruises on many occasions after silently accepting beatings from the other children. Then I would wait for Han to drunkenly enter my room and beat me senseless over my ‘affair’ with Leia or wait for my mother to whisper in my ear and cover my mouth while she had her way with my limp, battered body. Her nails felt like knives stabbing my flesh. On average, I felt the pricks thirty-three times each time she came to me.*

*I soaked up the abuse like a sponge and wrung it out as I aged by murdering unsuspecting women. Consciously, I blamed Han—but I took out my true revenge on Leia.*

*“Bonjour, maman,” I said politely as I sat down.*

*“Bonjour, mon cheri. I haven’t been able to visit the market so I made you pancakes and eggs for lunch today. I hope you don’t mind too much.”*

*“That’s okay.”*

*A cup of red wine was resting beside my plate. It was commonplace. Mother frequently offered me wine, usually with each meal, and it irritated the Donator to no end. It was ironic, really: a French immigrant descended from a wealthy family fled to the United States in search of something more, only to find herself mired in the worst sort of situation. She clung tightly to her heritage.*

*“What do you think of this car?” mother asked, turning the newspaper to face me. “Your father is always ranting about how I borrow his too frequently so I was considering buying my own.” She smiled and the dimples of her cheeks darkened. “We could have some privacy.”*

*My stomach still twisted as it had years ago but I was becoming more numb by the day. I merely shrugged and continued eating, training my eyes on three children chasing each other outside. Mother preferred that I stayed away from them and their torn overalls. I had no friends. I wasn’t permitted. Leia insisted that she was all I would ever need.*

*The front door opened and the Donator himself entered, garbed in his own dirty construction clothes with his brown hair plastered to his head. He was tall like I would become and had a thick*

*beard. He shut the door behind him and set his brown paper bag on the kitchen counter, watching mother and me.*

*Maman looked at him irately. "No food for your son, Han? Certainly you've realized by now that Ben can't subsist off of beer like you can."*

*The Donator's mouth twisted angrily and he began to respond but noticed the goblet in my hand. He growled and lumbered forward to rip it from my grasp, then promptly doused my mother in the wine. Leia leapt to her feet with a furious shriek. Her favorite red nightgown was ruined.*

*"This isn't France," the Donator snarled, sticking his index finger in her face. "Quit drownin' my kid in wine or you're going to regret it."*

*"It's a perfectly acceptable drink for lunch, inbred!"*

*"No, you just want him buzzed." The Donator suddenly grabbed my mother's neck and shook her violently to her head snapped back and forth. "And if I hear you in his fucking bedroom tonight, I'm really going to smack the shit out of you!"*

*"Ben needs me!" she wailed, struggling against his iron grasp. "You don't understand!"*

*"If you hadn't given him such a dumbass name he might have more goddamn friends!"*

*I was already well acquainted with my social inadequacies. Agitated by their mention, I stood quickly from my chair and attacked the Donator in the only way available: sinking my teeth into his forearm. He howled in agony and released my mother, cursing. Mother snatched my hand and hurried up the stairs to my bedroom, slamming and locking the door before the Donator could follow.*

*Mother led me into my closet amongst the pillows and blankets she had set out long ago. She held me in her lap and sang the familiar tune while the Donator pounded on the door.*

*"Au clair de la lune  
Mon ami Pierrot  
Prête-moi ta plume  
Pour écrire un mot  
Ma chandelle est morte  
Je n'ai plus de feu  
Ouvre-moi ta porte  
Pour l'amour de Dieu..."*

*I closed my eyes and leaned into her bosom as her lissome fingers slipped beneath the hem of my jeans on the last note. The others closed around my lips to suppress my whimpering. She smelled of flowers.*

*My eyes snapped open.*

*I jerked back to find I had passed out on top of my latest victim and drenched the bed in blood. Her blue eyes had rolled back, wide and unseeing, and two gory stumps were all that was left of her breasts. My hands trembled as I assessed the extent of the damage to the corpse and ran my bloody hands through my black hair. I had begun my frenzy before the rape. I'd deviated.*

*Swallowing, I peeled off my clothing soaked in her insides and staggered about the room. No... No. I made a mistake. I'd never be able to clean the room and return to Rey before she woke.*

I began dismembering the corpse in a fit of hysteria, haphazardly chopping her into small pieces to throw in a garbage bag. No time. I had to get back to maman. Two weeks of waiting had been torture and if she roused alone in my closet, I would never be able to have her. She would flee upon discovering the cut I had drawn down her ribcage.

“Can’t leave her alone,” I muttered, shaking my head and gathering severed fingers in a bloody pile. “Have to kill Tam—Rose next.”

*Tammy shoves me down in the creek. It’s my sixteenth birthday and I’m mildly happy about the cake my mother promised to make me. I turn on my back in the water as the four girls gather around me in a semicircle. My long dead heart skips a beat.*

*“Take off your pants, Peewee.”*

My mind was aflutter with deeply buried memories and the GHB was no longer suppressing them. I shoved the rest of the brutalized corpse into the garbage bag and opened the hotel window to set it outside on the sidewalk. There was no hope of cleaning the room. Gore had been flung every which way and my clothes themselves were destroyed.

I took deep, rattling breaths and drew my forearm across my head.

*Maman laughs when I tell her about Tammy and her friends assaulting me. They raped me in the creek. It was icy cold and blood poured from my hands in my struggle to escape. My body betrayed me. The shame rang in my ears to the tune of my shallow panting and stifled groans.*

*“Ben, surely you could fend off a few teenage girls, hm?” She smokes her cigarette and laughs again, shaking her head. “Silly boy. Don’t share your cock with anyone else.”*

*I stare at my cake, silent. She used vanilla frosting. I hate vanilla frosting.*

My ears continued ringing as I pulled free of the memory, stumbling back and clutching my head. I could feel Tammy rocking on top of me and see her grinning when I screamed...

It was the closest I had come to shedding in tear in many years. Distraught, I abandoned the hotel room through the window with my blood-strained shirt under my arm and managed to get back to my vehicle. I left the mangled corpse on the sidewalk and started the Audi, staring blankly into space, trembling. I had to get home to Rey. She loved me. She would understand.

## Finds and shall find me unafraid.

Something was very wrong.

Again I came to in Kylo's closet, clutching a cut that traveled down my ribs. I realized the blanket had dried blood pooled on it and my bra was lying beside me, cut in half. My ears rang as I staggered to my feet and groaned softly. All I remembered was going to a party with Rose and texting Kylo...

My eyes fell upon a knife buried in the wood beside me. I stared at it for a long minute before the laughter of a sitcom drifted up to the stairs and distracted me. Swallowing hard, I staggered to my feet and slipped my shirt on and opened the closet door.

The bedroom was empty. I looked around for any signs of Kylo and groped my back pocket for my phone. It was gone. I knew I brought it with me. Ice trickled down my spine. He'd picked me up from the party so I didn't have my car, either. For all intents and purposes, I was trapped. Maybe he had a house phone laying around somewhere.

I took heavy steps downstairs to the living room, expecting to see Kylo zombified before the television. The sitcom was playing but he was nowhere to be seen.

"Kylo?" I called. "We need to talk."

The people on the TV were arguing and it was the only sound I could hear. I folded my arms over my chest and walked into the dark kitchen first, soon routing around to the formal dining room to see he wasn't there, either. I looked out the window to see his car still parked, which meant there was only one more place he could be.

The basement door was set in the stairs and I felt a strange sense of déjà vu. I hesitantly opened the door and peered down the long staircase into the black abyss below. It was even colder than the house and smelled strongly of must. I opened my mouth to call his name again when I heard a faint tune drifting up the stairs toward me...

*Au clair de la lune  
Mon ami Pierrot  
Prête-moi ta plume  
Pour écrire un mot  
Ma chandelle est morte  
Je n'ai plus de feu  
Ouvre-moi ta porte  
Pour l'amour de Dieu*

The door creaked as I leaned my weight on it. Hearing the lullaby coming from the shadowy basement made it feel far more sinister. The abyss stared back into me as I debated whether or not I should proceed. I had no phone and no other way home...

I glanced over my shoulder before taking the first step into the basement but left the door open behind me to offer some light. The steps already had bare footprints on them.

*Au clair de la lune,  
Pierrot répondit :  
« Je n'ai pas de plume,*

*Je suis dans mon lit.  
Va chez la voisine,  
Je crois qu'elle y est,  
Car dans sa cuisine  
On bat le briquet. »*

I shivered and rubbed my arms, afraid to make a sound for some reason. It felt like I was intruding on hallowed ground. The thin beam of light from upstairs disintegrated when I reached the bottom step and my eyes struggled to adjust. The cement floor was frigid beneath the fragile soles of my feet.

*Au clair de la lune,  
L'aimable Lubin;  
Frappe chez la brune,  
Elle répond soudain :  
—Qui frappe de la sorte ?  
Il dit à son tour :  
—Ouvrez votre porte,  
Pour le Dieu d'Amour.*

There was a shaky male voice intermingling with the woman singing the song. I walked through the empty basement that stretched into oblivion on either side of me and headed toward a small circle of light around a corner. Water was running against a sink and something was being scrubbed very hard. I heard a sound of metal and started trembling.

*Au clair de la lune,  
On n'y voit qu'un peu.  
On chercha la plume,  
On chercha le feu.*

Frightened, I turned the corner to see Kylo hunched on the floor with his bare back exposed, spine protruding in the weak light. His hair was dripping on the cement and a lone candle flickered two feet away from him in two thin beams across the floor. There was a faucet turned on before him that had since overfilled whatever container was hidden by his back. My eyes flickered down to the pool that had gathered around his body. He was soaked.

Something splashed in the water. Kylo's voice strengthened on the last four lines. An old boombox was on the opposing side of the candle, playing the eerie lullaby.

*En cherchant d'la sorte,  
Je n'sais c'qu'on trouva ;  
Mais je sais qu'la porte  
Sur eux se ferma.*

The song tapered off and I expected it was over but soon I heard the first line again. My spine prickled and I took a small step back when Kylo obediently resumed singing. His voice was colder now; almost as cold as the freezing basement he had set up shop in.

The candle suddenly flared and illuminated the water around Kylo, glistening maroon against the stony grey floor beneath. My eyes widened and I couldn't look away as a thin line of water trickled toward my feet. Red? Why the hell was the water *red*? It had to be from rust, right?

“Ouvre-moi ta porte,” he sang, harshly scrubbing something, “pour l’amour de Dieu.” The woman kept singing the song but Kylo threw down whatever he was holding and grabbed the back of his



head with both hands, leaning forward and screaming. “Pour l’amour de Dieu, pour l’amour de Dieu, *pour l’amour de Dieu!*”

Kylo panted for a few moments while the song continued in the background and the water gathered into a lake. His grip tightened on his hair and he shook his head, laughing derisively to himself. Terrified, I took a step back and my foot splashed in the water.

He stiffened and immediately twisted his upper body to face me, unleashing his wide and wild gaze on me before I could take another step. His blue eyes seemed to glow in the pressing darkness and caught each small flare of the candle. I was trapped. Running away would trigger him to give chase—and he’d catch me. Easily.

A minute passed before anything happened. Kylo shut off the boombox and slowly got to his feet, only wearing a pair of briefs that were almost soaked through. I touched the wall when he wavered and I glanced at the Rubbermaid container he’d been sitting in front of. The water inside it was a deep red and my gaze zeroed in on an enormous butcher knife in his left hand. Blood.

My heart thundered. “...What are you doing?”

“Bonjour, maman,” Kylo slurred, bowing dramatically. He staggered. His eyes were vacant and I could smell alcohol. “How did you sleep?”

I didn’t know how to escape. I stared at him, unmoving. His body was all lean, sinewy muscle and I could see small circular scars on his stomach. I’d seen them before. Cigarette burns.

“Are... are you okay, Kylo?” I asked as gently as possible. “I wanted to talk about last night.”

He shrugged and scooped up a bottle of wine off the floor, taking a long drink, and waved the knife around. “Let’s have breakfast, hm?” He threw the bottle off into the darkness and it shattered, making me jump. “Yes—breakfast first. Come, come, maman.”

Whatever was happening, it was best to go along with it. I eyed the knife in Kylo’s hand and smiled faintly when he beamed down at me while feeling sick with fear. Was he going to kill me or something? Was that why I had a cut on my ribs and kept waking up in his creepy closet? He was the last person who saw Poe alive. Did he...

I had a tough time keeping my composure as we walked into the kitchen. Kylo was too wasted to pick up on my subtle anxiety as he hummed loudly and stumbled around looking for things. He stopped abruptly and whirled around as I slipped into one of the stools at the island. We blinked at one another until he nodded and blindly groped on the counter for the stove dials.

“Good,” he muttered. “Good. Stay right there.”

He was holding the knife still, swinging it around like it was a yo-yo. His back was rippled with muscle, too, and I covered my mouth when I saw even more cigarette burns and raised, knotted scars that looked like they could be from a whip. Holy shit. Jesus Christ.

I shook my head and spoke into my palm. “Kylo, what happened to your back?”

His movements ceased and his shoulders tightened. “What about my back?” His voice dropped low, no longer breezy and amused. Sore spot, apparently.

“N-Nothing.” I twiddled my thumbs, swallowing hard. “You’re soaked. Want me to get you clothes?”

“No,” he snapped, “sit there and let me take care of you.”

“Okay, okay. I’m sorry.”

Things were rapidly going south. Kylo took out another bottle of wine from the fridge and yanked off the cork with his teeth to start drinking it while he struggled to cook food. I couldn’t believe what was happening. He’d always been kind of strange but he helped me with my homework and with Poe and he’d never taken advantage of me when I had to crash because I was too drunk to go home.

Or did he?

My stomach turned at the thought. I wanted to go home. I wanted my mom. Tears welled in my eyes and I hurriedly wiped them away as they rolled down my cheeks, but a small sob escaped.

Kylo glanced back at me. “Maman?” He finally dropped the knife and rushed over to take my face between his hands, eyes wide. “Why are you crying?”

Oh my god—I had to think of an excuse. I’d watched *Criminal Minds* enough times to know he’d freak out if I ruined the fantasy. But it was a lot harder in practice to look back at someone with a bloody knife and pretend everything was fine than the TV show made it seem. My lower lip quivered but I bit back my sobs and smiled weakly at his distressed expression.

“I’m just... so... happy,” I lied.

Kylo kissed the tip of my nose and rested his forehead on mine, eyes closed. “Good. Good good.” He took a shaky breath and pressed his lips to mine; sloppy at first, like he was unsure. Then his tongue slipped in my mouth and he groaned and dragged me out of the chair.

I kissed him back, scared and unsure, and he lifted me into his damp, clammy arms and carried me to the kitchen table. He laid me on my back and leaned across me, planting his hands on either side of my head and rolling my lower lip through his teeth. His mouth tasted like red wine.

The stove beeped. Kylo ignored it for a minute, opting to push his head under my shirt again, but the beeping kept going and he had to draw away to go check it. I didn’t dare move. I laid there and stared up at the white ceiling with my legs draped over the edge of the table. Was he having an episode or something? If Dr. Skywalker was his psychiatrist, maybe I could call him when Kylo fell asleep.

“I apologize for leaving last night, Rey.” Pans rattled and scraped on the counter. “I was very distressed and I needed to kill *someone*.”

I broke out in a cold sweat. I was going to die here.

Kylo kept talking like nothing was wrong. “I left the body behind in my haste to get home to you. But don’t fret—the other two I killed for you will never be found.”

“...Poe? And Miranda?”

“Yes, yes, maman. Rose is next.”

Oh my god. I forced my tears back and tried to change the subject, knowing I’d cry if I kept thinking of him murdering my best friend. I could try to convince him not to. He killed Poe and Miranda, though, probably with the same butcher knife he was cleaning off in the basement.

“Will you kill me?” I whispered, voice wavering.

Kylo laughed. “Of course not. What a waste that would be.”

Oh, thank god. I smiled and laughed back a little and then he returned to me, shadow looming across my body. He stared at me vacantly for a moment then knelt on the floor and tugged my hips over the edge of the table. I struggled with tremors as Kylo yanked my jeans and panties to my knees and his long fingers wound around my hips to hold me in place.

Without another word, he licked a wet line up my slit and slipped his tongue in my folds. I clenched the edge of the table at first and tried to pretend I wasn't there. Don't cry, don't cry; just shut up. I tried to play along and reached out a hand for his hair.

Kylo growled like a dog between my legs. “Don't touch me.”

I jerked my hand back and returned to grabbing the table's edge. It was cold and my back hurt from the angle, but I didn't dare say anything. Kylo went back to what he was doing, occasionally stopping to kiss along my thighs, and I squeezed my eyes shut. The only thing I'd ever done was kissing and sometimes letting a guy get to second base. This was terrifying. I felt exposed and dirty.

The stove twittered again and Kylo growled irately before standing up, making a show of licking his lips. I desperately wanted to pull up my pants and I had nothing to keep me up on the table, so I slid to my feet and stood there with my hands clasped awkwardly to shield myself from his blue eyes. My jeans were down by my knees, too tight to slide any further.

Kylo scooped eggs and bacon and toast on plates and came back to me. He carelessly dropped the food on the table and hoisted me up by my hips onto the table again to resume eating me out. I reddened and clenched my knees nervously, hoping he would get bored and stop.

“Relax, maman,” he murmured. “Come for me.”

“I... I can't. I don't know how.”

His tongue lingered along the top and flooded me with warmth and pleasant tingles. “Yes, you do.”

My breath caught and I was seized by another urge to tangle my fingers in his black hair, but I resisted and squeezed the edge of the table. Kylo kept going, holding my hips in place, and soon I was rocking into his mouth. It felt so good... and if I didn't do what he wanted...

A small whimper slipped through my mouth and I dug my nails into the wood as the sensations peaked at the apex of my thighs. He grunted and started to stand, pushing a plate aside that ended up shattering on the floor. Kylo pulled me closer and I bit my lower lip and arched as prickly heat ebbed through my body like a wave, briefly washing out my terror.

My eyes roamed the ceiling blindly as he stood up and reached into his underwear. I snapped right back to reality and sat up on the edge of the table, realizing what he intended on doing next.

“We should eat... first,” I said, trailing off when I saw the broken plate. I kept my hands on the edge of the table. He didn't like being touched. At least, not right now. “Right?”

Kylo tilted his head and shrugged. “Yes—and I need to clean up this mess.” He kissed me, smearing my lips with my own essence, and drew away. “I'll be back, maman. Eat.”

I watched with bated breath as he walked upstairs, leaving me alone in the kitchen. Now was my chance.

My foot landed right on a shard of porcelain when I jumped down but I was too terrified to care. I pulled up my pants and ran a hand through my hair, padding out to the living room as quietly as possible to look for Kylo's keys. They had to be somewhere. Running out into the woods wouldn't help me at all; I'd just get lost and end up dying in the snow. His phone was probably in his bedroom and I was absolutely not risking walking up there.

But the keys were nowhere to be seen. I turned in a circle, breaking down into sobs again, and pushed my hair back from my face. What was I going to do? He would kill me like he killed everyone else. How many people had he killed? What did he do to them?

The stairs creaked as Kylo walked back down them. I rushed out to the kitchen and sat at the table, shaking, to eat the food he'd made. He wandered in and mumbled under his breath, now dressed in grey sweatpants and a black t-shirt. He cleaned up the broken plate and went back to the huge knife to sheath it in an old scabbard then took another swig of wine.

I felt sick eating the food but I didn't dare refuse to eat. Kylo approached and casually dragged me out of the chair to the floor to wrap around me like a snake, winding his arms and legs through mine and hooking his chin over my shoulder. He handed me the half-empty plate and wrapped his arms around my stomach, sighing and satisfied.

My stomach twisted with each bite as Kylo sang the lullaby under his breath and rocked back and forth, slow and steady like a cradle. I set the plate down when I was through and squeezed my eyes shut as he gave me sloppy, lingering kisses on my neck and reached his long fingers under my shirt to fondle my breasts. My skin burned everywhere he touched it.

"Love you," he mumbled. "Gonna fuck you."

I stiffened but the alcohol overpowered him. He passed out behind me, leaning on my back, and tightened his grip whenever I tried to slip away. I was still trapped, but it gave me a chance to finally cry and start trying to process what the fuck was happening.

## It matters not how strait the gate,

### Chapter Notes

awkward first times are my lifeblood

yah i'm updating reylita; i update whatever is intriguing me tbh

Time stood still.

Kylo remained draped over me like a terrifying, suffocating blanket and I cried to myself in the quiet kitchen. I didn't know what to think or what to do. He said he wouldn't kill me but clearly he wasn't reliable enough for me to depend on his word. I'd probably end up dead just like Poe and Miranda.

A phone rang upstairs. I perked up at the sound and Kylo stirred, groaning under his breath and tightening his arms around me. He lifted his head like a sleepy black-maned lion and yawned into my collar bone before making a surprised and pleased sound in his throat. I stiffened as he kissed the side of my neck and my breath hitched anxiously when he leaned forward to push me on my hands and knees.

His movements were still clumsy and awkward. He arched across me and struggled to yank down my jeans as the phone kept buzzing away somewhere in the house. I hung my head and fought the urge to crawl away from his hungry, roaming hands.

"Fuck," Kylo muttered. He grabbed the back of my neck and pushed me flat on my stomach on the floor, hastily alternating between pulling on my pants and his. "...What the... fuck?"

I swallowed hard. "Um... someone's calling you."

"It's Skywalker. I wanna fuck you first." Kylo had managed to get his sweatpants down a few inches and I felt him press on my jeans, hot and hard. "Why are you wearing fucking pants?"

"...Sorry?"

The phone stopped just to start up again. He laid flat on top of me, nosing into my hair, and rocked desperately against my butt instead of continuing to strip me. It was gross and uncomfortable but much better than him shoving his dick inside me. Kylo panted and held one of my hips to get better leverage and I went slack and closed my eyes, trying to imagine I was anywhere else but underneath him.

"God, Rey... *fuck*," he groaned.

He leaned back and dragged my hips to his, controlling them with his hands, and managed to get my jeans just past my butt. My panties were still on thankfully, but I couldn't resist struggling when I felt him pushing between my legs. He murmured to me and kept pushing on—and the phone rang again.

Kylo growled under his breath and stood, pulling me up with him. He wasn't staggering as much and dragged me upstairs and down the hallway to his bedroom towards the ringing phone.

He dumped me in the closet and I fell into the pile of blankets and pillows, right next to the CD player with the lullaby disc in it. I peered out to watch him scoop up his cell phone from the nightstand. He ran a hand through his black hair and took a steadying breath before answering it.

“Luke.” His voice wavered.

I obviously couldn’t hear anything else. Kylo listened to his psychiatrist and crossed to the dresser to rummage through one of the top drawers while I kept a careful eye on him. He seemed more lucid now and his typical cold countenance was coming back.

Dread dropped in my stomach when I saw the red nightgown in his hand. He kept talking to Dr. Skywalker and continued pushing clothes aside until he found a small bottle of pills. I shifted back into the darkness when he popped two in his mouth and swallowed them dry. Something was off. Kylo was on a drug and it was starting to wear off. That was why he was acting so bizarre.

So maybe everything he said was... hallucinations? He nodded while Luke spoke and turned his neck until it cracked, blue eyes rolling back. I got the distinct feeling that now was the time to run.

Kylo shrugged. “That’s unfortunate.” Then he slammed the drawer shut and held the phone away from his ear, still not looking at me. “I’m quite busy right now, Luke. Do you mind calling back?”

Yeah, I needed to run. But he hung up the phone and tossed it on the dresser in the next moment and I skittered back into the closet, hastily nudging aside pillows and avoiding the dried spot of blood on the sheets. I was outdoorsy and I liked hiking and ran track in middle school but I couldn’t outrun him. Plus, I had no idea how he’d react if I tried and he inevitably caught me.

Hopefully Dr. Skywalker had recognized that something was seriously wrong with Kylo. Otherwise, my options for escape were seriously dwindling—unless I waited for him to fall asleep.

The dark closet grew somber as Kylo knelt just inside the entrance and silently unbuttoned my jeans. He yanked them off my hips, dragging me down a few inches, and pulled my shirt off without saying a word. Trembling, I held up my arms to let him drape the nightgown over me and came to the sickening realization that it probably didn’t belong to his sister.

His lips were on mine before I could utter a word and he pushed me into the pillows. He groped blindly to turn on the CD player and to my surprise, pulled a green blanket over us when the lullaby began drifting lazily about the closet. I tried to keep my hands from touching him but he strained closer between my legs and my shivering fingers alighted on his chest.

Kylo stopped dead. He leaned back, staring down at me blankly, and left the closet without an explanation. A door opened and shut and I waited a few seconds before creeping forward to see if he was still around. My heart hammered so hard I thought it might rip out.

All those times I trusted him and drank his wine and thought he genuinely *liked* me. Why hadn’t he killed me? Was it too hard to hide?

The coast was clear. I crawled out of the closet, hunching slightly and listening for any signs of Kylo, and snatched his phone off the dresser. It had a passcode of course but at least I had it. I’d need boots if I was going outside—and pants, and a coat, but I didn’t have time for all that.

I practically ran for the front door, bare feet slapping across the floor on my way to the stairs. On the last step the doorbell rang and my heart leapt in my throat. I checked over my shoulder for Kylo and opened it without a second thought.

Dr. Skywalker was standing there in a coat and brimmed hat and his smile faded when he saw me.

Snow was drifting past him outside. A storm was brewing but I was relieved to see him.

“How long have you been here?” he asked, gaze flickering to the stairs.

“I... I think a day?” I grabbed his arms and tears ran down my cheeks. “There’s something wrong with him—we have to leave right now!”

“How nice to see you, Luke.”

Both of us turned our eyes to the stairs to see Kylo standing between two facing toward us, his head tilted slightly and a ghoulish smile on his lips. His hands were in his pockets and he was eerily still.

Dr. Skywalker promptly removed his hands from my arms and took an obvious step back. Kylo’s cold eyes didn’t leave Luke’s hands. Was he... *jealous*?

“Good afternoon,” Dr. Skywalker said. “How are you feeling, Kylo?”

The stairs groaned as Kylo idly descended them, stretching the smile as far across his face as it could go. He stopped at the bottom and the hairs on the back of my neck stood up.

“Rey and I are a bit busy,” Kylo said, completely ignoring Luke’s question. “Is there something I can help you with? I’m sure you didn’t brave this blizzard for no reason.”

“I was only visiting to discuss the recent murders,” Luke replied coolly. “Two of Miss Kenobi’s friends, if I’m not mistaken, and another last night. Such a tragedy.”

No, no—what was he doing. I wanted to shake my head but I couldn’t risk taking my eyes off Kylo. What would he do? He wouldn’t hurt either of us, right?

He slowly approached us and stood directly in front of Luke, tall and intimidating. “Karma does have a fascinating habit of rebounding to collect what it has missed.”

Dr. Skywalker smiled. “Yes, it does. Well, I don’t want to impose and Miss Kenobi told me she isn’t feeling very well. I’m sure she needs to grieve loss of her friend. I’ll bring her home myself and see you on another day, Kylo.”

I watched in horror as Kylo reached behind himself to withdraw the glinting butcher knife from his belt loop. Luke immediately stepped in front of me and straightened his spine to stare him down. I slowly shook my head and got ready to run.

“Rey belongs to me,” Kylo said tonelessly.

The knife slashed forward and I heard a sickening sound of metal on flesh before Luke collapsed on his knees before me. He fell face-first to the floor making all sorts of gruesome noises and blood poured freely from the huge gash across his throat. Kylo stood over him with the knife now covered in gore and his icy blue eyes flickered up to gauge my expression.

I staggered back, covering my mouth in horror, and bolted out the open front door into the driving snow. I had no shoes and I was wearing a nightgown but I was willing to risk frostbite and death instead of having my throat slit open.

I’d never run so fast in my life. In five seconds flat my bare feet were crunching through the thick drifts of snow and dead leaves and I was squinting against gusts of cold wind. Tears streamed down my cheeks and hardened along the way, causing painful crinkles in my skin when I screamed.

I avoided the driveway and ran straight for the woods where I thought I could lose him. Branches snapped at my flesh and I rapidly lost sensation in my feet but I was beyond terrified and had lost all sense. *Fuck* playing along. Kylo was fucking murderer and he would kill me sooner or later. If I could put some distance between us, maybe I would eventually find my way back to civilization.

My aimless running brought me to the edge of the muddy, dirty swamp that had frozen over. The ring of trees around it had taken on a sinister, skeletal shape and I turned in circles in the snow trying to figure out where to go next. The snow fell in a quiet sheet around me, obscuring the thick trees in the distance and making it very hard to see. I folded my arms over my chest and shivered miserably.

I looked down at the thin layer of ice and immediately locked eyes with the sockets of a badly decomposed human head that had yet to be buried by the muck. The jaw was hanging open in an eternal scream and tufts of blonde hair still stuck to the eroding flesh.

I backtracked rapidly through the snow, shaking my head and covering my mouth to keep from yelling any more. I would make myself too obvious if I kept making noise. Kylo would find me in a heartbeat and slit my throat like he had done to Luke. Oh god. Oh god, please no. I'd finally found where I belonged and it felt like everything was getting better. I wasn't ready to die.

He killed my friends. Why did he kill my friends? What did he want from me?

"Rey."

My freezing feet snapped with pain as I spun around to face Kylo. He had shoes and a coat on—clearly he hadn't been in a rush to catch me. The knife was nowhere to be seen.

I backed away from him, holding my hands out and crying. "Please... I just want to go home."

"I'm afraid I can't allow that." His jaw clenched and he snapped his fingers, gesturing towards himself. "You're going to freeze to death. Come quietly."

"NO! You—you killed Poe and Miranda! And you just killed Luke!" I kept backing up, not paying attention.

Kylo shifted forward a step. "Yes, I did. For you—because I love you, Rey."

"No, you—"

I'd hardly pressed the sole of my foot to the ice when it gave out and sent me tumbling into the icy swamp. My breath caught the moment the freezing water seared my skin and I couldn't move my arms to try to catch myself in the deep, thick, frozen muck. Shards of broken ice swept across my face as I sank, burying me right beside the rotting corpse of Poe Dameron.

Kylo yanked me out of the dark, cold prison and scooped me into his arms. All my muscles were seizing and trembling from shock and even my heart was fluttering in my chest from the severe cold. He wrapped his coat around me and carried me back the way we came. I tried to slow my chattering teeth and found myself instinctively curling closer to his warm chest, desperate to thaw out.

"We have to relocate, my love," he murmured. "Things have become a bit too complicated here."

No... no, no, no. I didn't want to 'relocate.'

He brought me back inside the house, casually stepping over Dr. Skywalker's dead body, and took



his phone from me to toss it on the side table beside the door. I couldn't feel my feet and was wracked with violent tremors as my body tried to heat up again.

We went upstairs. I couldn't scream or cry or make a sound. It seemed like he was lucid again, but he was still... off, somehow. I squeezed my eyes shut as he nudged open the bedroom door, expecting to be tossed in the closet again to shiver miserably until the cold water dried off.

Kylo peeled back his bed sheets and lowered me to the floor to throw off the coat and the soaked nightgown. I crossed my arms over my chest, now only wearing wet panties, which he also stripped off. I made a weird choking sound as he began taking off his clothes, too, and he clicked his tongue like he was chastising me for being upset. There was no point in fighting back anymore, unless I wanted to die.

"Shh," he cooed, "no more tears, maman." He held my cheeks and tenderly kissed my forehead. "I won't hurt you. That's what other women are for."

Was that supposed to make me feel better? I tried not to cry but my lips kept trembling as Kylo kissed along the side of my face down to my lips. He pushed closer urgently and I fell back on the mattress with him crawling on top of me, angling my head into the pillows. This wasn't how I imagined my first time—shivering from frostbite with my serial killer astronomy professor assuring me strangers would bear the brunt of his utter insanity.

He broke our kiss for a moment and his blue eyes searched mine. "...Touch me."

There was something wrong there, too. Why did he hate being touched, and why was he suddenly wanting it? I wanted to know, but I didn't want to know at the same time.

Trembling, I reached up to run my fingertips through his hair, slow and tentative. His eyebrows drew together and he scowled but didn't tell me to stop. My fingers slithered onward through his thick, soft black hair and my nails grazed across his scalp. He had gone stiff and his breathing slowed.

Kylo nuzzled into the crook of my neck and rocked between my legs. I hadn't been told to stop, so I wandered my hands down the back of his neck to his shoulders. He shivered and gave a few jerky thrusts against me, on the brink of sinking inside. I kept my grip on his shoulders and didn't budge. His skin was hot and I was quickly warming up but still felt like I couldn't move.

"I'm scared," I blurted.

He pushed inside me without another word and my breath hitched. Okay. This was it.

"Don't be," he mumbled.

It hurt a little. Mostly it felt like tight pressure and stretching but it was kind of overwhelming. I whimpered and dug my nails into his skin. Kylo groaned and began a steady rhythm, much different than the aggressive thrusting I assumed he'd sink into, and I relaxed a little bit.

"Good girl." He kissed my collarbone and grunted. "Good girl, Rey."

I shivered the entire time and clung to Kylo like a raft. He was happy to take charge and delighted in each involuntary tremble. It wasn't what I expected and it was hard to reconcile in my mind. I'd expected to be screaming and fighting him but I found myself panting lightly and squirming into his hips with each thrust. I swallowed hard and closed my eyes and tried to resist the lust driving my body.

“Good girl,” Kylo whispered again. “You’re so fucking tight.” He shifted, bicep tightening next to my head. “You’re mine, Rey. Mine.”

“Ah—okay.”

We kept going and I stopped fighting back. Luke was dead near the door downstairs, my feet were prickling with frostbite, and I knew Kylo was a murderer, but I moaned and clung to him, anyway.

## What the hammer? what the chain,

### Chapter Notes

get ready to feel even worse for kylo lmfao  
i got another good a/u idea but i am dying from all these idea bunnies

*“Hey! Where do you think you’re going, Peewee?”*

*It was a sweltering afternoon in Alabama. I was walking home down the faded, cracked road I had traveled most of my life to the small trailer for my 16<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration. The voice was familiar—Tammy Fields, a girl who was half my size and an unapologetic bully. I blinked and turned to face her, shouldering the heavy burden of my backpack. I’d rented more astronomy books.*

*Tammy circled closer with her small posse of girls, long blonde curls grimy and tangled. She was wearing a torn pink and white dress that hung to her knees and her filthy white socks hung at odd angles. I detested her with every fiber of my being. I wanted her to die.*

*I stepped back. I was still rather lanky and relied more upon speed to escape rather than brute force. Mother had taught me to never become violent with the other children even though my insides screamed for blood to be spilt. My eyes flickered between the three blonde girls as they formed a semicircle around me. I had nothing to offer them. They were solely seeking to humiliate me.*

*Tammy put her hands on her hips. “Where ya goin’, Peewee? You’re always in a rush.”*

*It was a silly nickname I had been granted in elementary school. I wanted to scowl but it was safer to show no emotion in those situations. I shrugged and fingered the worn straps of my backpack.*

*“Home,” I said indifferently. “It’s my birthday.”*

*“We’ve gotta celebrate, then.” She bared her teeth, yellow and crooked, and her blue eyes flickered down to my belt. “Let’s all go swimming at the creek.”*

*My pulse pounded in my ears. “I don’t know how to swim. I really have to go.”*

*“We’ll show ya how,” she drawled and her cronies snickered. “C’mon, it’ll be fun.”*

*I’d seen the same flicker in my mother’s eyes when she pulled me into bed with her. Reflexively, I took another step back and gauged how close the other two girls were. If I could slip between them I would be home free and survive another day. The shortest blonde winked at me.*

*Then Tammy’s fist was grasping the front of my shirt and she dragged me closer, leaning over me and grinning like Leia. I’d tried to train myself to not feel fear but it was poignant at that moment, seeping through my veins like poison. I was afraid of Tammy as I always had been.*

*I swallowed. “I need to go home. Mother will worry.”*

*They all laughed. I was pulled away from the road, a six foot tall teenage male, by a group of*

*teenage girls. We walked through the sparse woods toward the sound of running water and Tammy threw me into the shallow creek. The cold water stung and I sliced my hand open trying to catch myself on some of the rocks, pouring blood into the trickling brook.*

*One of the girls took my book bag and I spun around to fight Tammy as she forced me down into the water so it soaked through my shirt. She was immensely strong. She showed her fangs like a rabid raccoon and held me down by my throat while her friends worked with my jeans.*

*The short one—Lorelei—covered my mouth when I screamed. The tallest one, an attractive girl who was a popular cheerleader, took me first. I thrashed desperately and struggled to keep my body from reacting but it was no use. She and the short one, who I recognized from an art class, enjoyed my body against my will. I felt them come but I was mercifully far too humiliated to do the same.*

*By the time Tammy enveloped me, I was sweating profusely. She threw back her head and moaned while I helplessly writhed beneath her. Don't feel, Ben. Don't feel. Restrain yourself.*

*My eyes rolled back and I panted into the tall one's hand when I regretfully finished inside Tammy. I'd lost the ability to cry many years back but I had never been closer to allowing tears down my cheek than that moment. She shivered and gleefully reached the same plateau. I was layered with sticky sweat.*

*Tammy kissed on me on the mouth. "That was good, Peepee. Try not to scream so much next time."*

*The group left me lying in the creek, half naked and trembling. I could hear their giggles and laughter until they pushed through the forest completely. Silence surrounded me on all fronts.*

*I sat up, covered in bruises from the rocks shifting beneath me during the ordeal. The water quietly trickled around my legs and minnows approached to inspect the blood that had trailed from my hand. I blankly stood and swayed on my feet for several moments. Staring. Why had I been cursed with this body that other people could control so easily? Why couldn't I unzip it and slip out and leave it behind?*

*Mother was at the kitchen table when I arrived home in my damp clothes. The boiling sun had done quite a bit for them. She beamed and hopped out of her chair to take my hand and I knew what she wanted. Me. I was her toy in the same way I existed to please Tammy and her friends. Bodies were not temples. They were prisons, and every wall inside mine was on fire.*

*She took me to bed. Her lips were on my neck. I lay underneath her and limply touched her knees while she bobbed on top of me, causing the bed to creak. She was always on top of me when we had sex. I was again stricken with the urge to cut myself open and find a means to escape my fleshy hell.*

*Leia drifted down to the kitchen to have a cigarette and read the paper. I waited for a few minutes before getting out of bed to follow her, silently dressing in my small bedroom. My skin was riddled with bruises and cuts that she had failed to notice or care about. I supposed they all blended together with the cigarette burns from Han and knotted scars from his belt across my back.*

*My encounter with Tammy still burned in my mind. I sat at the table with maman and eyed the cake on she had made. Vanilla. She knew I hated vanilla.*

*"Tammy Fields and her friends assaulted me," I said tonelessly.*

*My mother didn't glance up. She took another drag of her cigarette. "Did you use a condom?"*

*I gritted my teeth. "No, maman. They raped me."*

*"Well I don't want any grandchildren, Ben. You're enough work." Then she laughed and shook her head. "Surely you could have fought off a few teenage girls, hm? Silly boy. Don't share your cock with anyone else. Your life will be ruined if get one of these hicks pregnant."*

*My thoughts drifted back to my twelfth birthday, when I had recently begun puberty and struggled to hide my upsetting ability to ejaculate. I cried and hid my bedsheets after my first wet dream and came home from school to find my mother had put them back on my bed and was waiting for me in my room. She pushed my face into the stain and stimulated me with her other hand, demanding I apologize for 'wasting' my own bodily fluids. I sobbed and begged her to stop until I finished in her palm. She ate it.*

*Raging hormones ensured my body consistently betrayed me, no matter how revolted and terrified I was. I began hiding in the woods after school to avoid her. Unfortunately, Han was typically drunk and aggressive when I snuck inside late at night, and he would beat me until I spat out blood.*

*The first sixteen years of my life had been utter torture and left my body scarred and my mind in a constant state of tenuous hatred. My body had never been my own to control and it had never belonged to me. I decided at that moment that I would take it back—and force other people to feel my pain.*

*I stood, chair scraping on the floor. "I know what I have to do."*

*"Mhm." Leia waved vaguely. "Have fun, mon amour."*

*Silent, I proceeded outside to the back of our trailer. The axe Han used to cut wood was lying beside the pile on the edge of the house. I pulled on his work gloves and picked it up in one hand, tearing it free of the stump, and stalked back to the house, emotionless. Our neighbor's chihuahua yipped.*

*Maman didn't glance up. I dragged her from her chair by the hair and threw her on the floor, drawing a furious shriek, and stepped on her chest to hold her in place. Her blue eyes widened and a scream began in the back of her throat as I wordlessly swung the axe across her throat.*

*One strike was not enough. I was weak, and it took several hacks to detach my mother's head from her neck. I threw the axe across the room when the deed was done and blood poured freely from both parts of Leia onto the linoleum. Her body belonged to me now.*

*The key turned in the lock and Han entered the house.*

*His skin whitened several shades and he screamed, immediately making a break for the axe to assign me to the same fate as my mother. He swung and I managed to grab the fated frying pan, bludgeoning him in the head until he fell limp to the floor. The axe skidded into the pool of blood and Han's brains mixed with my mother's blood.*

*I held my frying pan and sank to the floor, dragging Cecilia's head to me by her blood-soaked hair. It was how the police ultimately found me—cradling her and gazing off into the distance. I'd never coated my cleaver with her blood like I imagined, but I wished that I had.*

*I woke with a wild gasp, gulping for air. The familiar sheen of sweat laced each inch of my skin and a strangled scream ripped from my throat before I could stop it. FUCK!*

*Don't feel, Kylo. Restrain yourself. The more you feel, the worse you hurt.* My breathing was painful and ragged and I was reeling from a mixture of wine, GHB, and Ritalin. I could feel my twelfth birthday all over again; maman humiliating me, losing my virginity to her and vomiting after she left my bedroom. I'd considered castrating myself with Han's razor but opted to mutilate my thighs instead.

*"You're a filthy animal, just like your filthy fucking father, coming all over the place and—"*

Soft, shivering cool fingers touched my cheek and I violently jerked away, wide-eyed and panting. The morning was coming and Rey's naked form was illuminated beside me, tilted on her side with one arm outstretched. I had attached her ankle to the rear post of my body to keep her from fleeing while I slept. Her eyes were wide and frightened like mine, but she inched closer.

"I'm here, Kylo," she whispered. "I'm here."

"That's no consolation to me!" I snapped, saving face.

Tears brimmed in her eyes, sparkling in the low light. She smiled. "I wish it was."

Her palm brushed across my skin again and I instinctively tilted my lips to kiss her hand, seeking comfort in my moment of weakness. She bravely extended her grasp and I found myself willingly moving closer. The quick pace of my heart slowed as her small fingers combed through my hair in a gentle rhythm. She was pliant and warm and wouldn't harm me.

Physical touch had repulsed me for my entire life—yet I found Rey's tolerable. It had surprised me in the closet and I'd left her to catch my breath in the bathroom, but I was no longer stricken with chest pains and fear when her small fingertips brushed my skin.

"...You were crying," Rey ventured after a moment of silence. When I didn't respond, she pressed on. "And you kept saying 'no.' Are... are you okay?"

Regardless of my odd, fluxing feelings towards her, I would never share my past. Or my emotions. I silently rolled across her back, tugging her hips to a better angle for penetration. Rey squirmed, muscles tensing with anxiety as I stroked my cock between her legs and breathed in the scent of her hair. She never smelled of flowers or vanilla, but like something cool and fresh. Cucumber, perhaps.

"Feeling better?" she squeaked. "I... I really need to talk to you about everything. I have to work later and my mom and Rian will expect a—"

I sank inside her with a hard thrust, cutting off her prattling. She gasped into the pillow and I held her hip firm to rock deep within her wet, unyielding flesh. Rey was incredibly tight, perhaps because she was so small and anxious, and it was a bit of a struggle to keep from coming in ten seconds. Taking her virginity hadn't been as violent as I had been planning. My sadistic urges had abated towards her. It was frustrating and I had no explanation for it.

I'd been in a haze the past few days—but now, Rey was mine.

"What do you want to talk about?" I whispered into her ear, rocking with long, slow motions.

"I don't... I don't understand..."

I kissed her shoulder. It had been a very long time since I last kissed a woman. "What can I illuminate for you?"

Rey was by far the most cripplingly empathetic person I had ever encountered. An easy victim, lured by her need for attention and affection, and willing to overlook red flags and faults that other more sensible women would flee from. It made trapping and fucking her even more pleasurable, more so than random murder and rape. Bizarre.

She lapsed into silence. I slipped my fingers between her legs, strangely concerned with bringing her to completion, and clenched my jaw when her walls tightened around me. Fuck. Fuck, fuck. My eyes rolled back in frustration and I stroked my fingertips through her folds, pleased to briefly feel my shaft sliding in and out of her body. Good. She was mine.

Her breaths lilted into whimpers and she strained against my fingers. I slowed my thrusts and flexed inside her to feel her already beginning to pulse around me. She panted and rolled her hips, pulling me, and I released her hip to grasp the headboard when she squeaked once in surprise as an orgasm rippled through her. Grunting, I jerkily pumped through the undulations of her muscles and spilled deep inside with my own involuntary groans of pleasure.

It was, along with the previous night, the first time I had sex that didn't involve screaming, murder, or my mother. I snapped my hips several more times until I was through and swallowed as I drew away from her trembling body.

She wrapped her arms around her pillow and refused to look at me. "I have to go to work." Her shoulder blades tightened across her skinny back. "...And I have to call my mom."

"Do you?" I murmured. I stepped out of bed and put on my sweatpants lying in a pile beside my mother's nightgown. Rey's nightgown. Mother, Rey; they were the same.

Rey nodded and shifted her hips as my cum leaked out of her. "Everyone is probably worried, since no one knows where Poe is or who killed Miranda."

I smiled. "Oh yes, what a mystery. And Dr. Skywalker—who do you imagine killed him?"

She assumed I was still wasted on my various substances, but I had come through the episode clearer than ever. We would move, perhaps to France to live with Leia's side of the family. They all felt terribly guilty for allowing her to raise me.

"I don't know," Rey lied in a small voice. "But... But I have to go."

I checked her cell phone as well as mine to find we both had messages from curious family members. Her mother assumed she was with me and Jaina asked if I intended on visiting Paris. I had not... But Rey and I needed to disappear somewhere, and France would be a much easier place to hide. Maman did not speak the language or know the terrain like I did.

I texted both parties and dropped the phones back into the dresser drawer, turning to admire Rey's naked body as she slowly sat up.

"...Doctor Ren?" she faltered. "Did you hear me?"

Yes—she would do nicely. Malleable and needy. Intelligent, but lacking common sense. My equal yet weak enough to control and subjugate. And, of course, she bore a striking resemblance to Leia without the sadistic intent to molest and violate me.

I smiled widely and cocked my head. "You're not going anywhere, Miss Kenobi. You're all mine now."

## How charged with punishments the scroll:

Whatever Kylo was taking or whatever was happening to him had stopped. He was lucid again, and he knew that I knew what he had done. I'd hoped he would wake up and forget everything or believe my lie if I did what he wanted but he knew everything. I stared across the room at him, mouth running dry, and he raised his eyebrows and smiled. What the fuck was I supposed to do now?

"The police are going to look for me," I said, trying not to cry.

"Oh, Rey—bask in the afterglow for a bit. You'll only lose your virginity once."

He walked over to the closet and I tried to cover my nakedness, frowning. Didn't he remember this was the second time? I jimmied the handcuff around my ankle while he rummaged around and pushed out different pieces of luggage, humming to himself. Maybe mom already called the cops.

"We're going on a trip," Kylo called. "Do you have a passport, Miss Kenobi?"

I jangled the cuff and managed to peel my foot free. Thank god for skinny ankles. I'd torn some skin and was bleeding a bit but it was better than being held captive by a fucking crazy person. My professor was busy in the closet and didn't notice.

"Uh... no," I replied. I did, but whatever.

He sighed. "Well that's a bother. You'll need one for our trip to France."

There wasn't a lot of time—I needed to be fast and quiet at the same time before he noticed I was free. I swiped my panties from the floor and his shirt and slipped out of bed without a sound. My heart was racing as he pushed stuff aside and muttered under his breath. Okay, a few steps to the door, grab his keys from the dresser, try for my phone, and run like hell.

I tried to quietly pick up said keys but they clicked together in mid-air. Kylo stiffened, still without a shirt, and whirled around to face me. We stared at one another for a split second.

Terrified, I bolted out the bedroom door and headed for the stairs. He was right behind me but I managed to throw open the front door and ran out into the thick drifts of snow towards his Audi. I passed Dr. Skywalker's Toyota and scrambled with the keys for a second, nearly dropping them, before Kylo grabbed me and swung me around towards the house.

I screamed and thrashed in his arms and he ended up dropping me in the snow a few times when I weaseled out of his grasp. He hissed in annoyance and ripped the keys out of my hand, drawing blood, then knelt on top of me and straddled my hips. I clawed blindly for his face until he slapped me so hard that it took my breath away. His long fingers locked around my jaw and he shook my head. Cold water seeped through my shirt as I cried and tried to pry his hand away from my face.

"Where do you think you're going?" Kylo whispered, leaning closer. It was freezing and quiet; only the distant sounds of crows broke the silence.

I sobbed harder and squirmed underneath him. "LET ME GO!"

We rose, with Kylo's fingers tangled in my hair to force me to walk. He shoved me into the snow again and I fell on my knees, beside myself, and swayed to my feet to walk again. And again he pushed me so I fell on my hands and knees. The cold bit at my skin and the frostbite from last night



prickled hot. I crawled a couple of feet before he scooped me up under my stomach and carried me inside the house.

The phone was ringing and he hadn't cleaned up Luke's blood yet. I bit his forearm until I tasted copper and Kylo made a mildly annoyed grunt and dropped me in the dried blood, stalking past me for the house phone. I tried to catch my breath and staggered to my feet, panting and glaring at him as he talked in French to the caller. My phone was upstairs.

I ran, somehow willing my frostbitten feet to cooperate, slipping a few times on the stairs but far ahead of Kylo. He shouted at me and I heard the phone clatter to the floor as he followed. Fuck, fuck, fuck...

I slipped again on water and fell hard on my knees and looked over my shoulder to find Kylo at the end of the hallway. Terrified, I scrambled the last few feet and narrowly escaped into the bedroom, slamming the door shut and twisting the lock. Kylo pounded on the door so hard that I covered my head, afraid he was going to break it down and get inside. I stayed that way for a few minutes, trembling. Holy fuck. Okay, okay.

"I'm calling the police!" I shouted, scrambling to my feet. I peeled off his shirt in disgust and put mine on before snatching my phone off the dresser. My passcode didn't work—he fucking changed it.

It took me way too long to remember there was an emergency bypass to call 911. As I slowly had a meltdown on the floor, I heard a door slide open.

My eyes snapped up to see Kylo entering from the balcony, eyes sharp and angry. I made a break for his bathroom but he seized the back of my shirt and dragged me to the floor underneath his feet. He wrestled my phone out of my bloody hand, throwing it across the room, and stepped on my back to keep me in place. I heard the rattle of handcuffs and he restrained my wrists behind my back, painfully tight.

"I thought we had an *understanding*, Rey," Kylo snapped, stalking past me. "I thought you loved me, but now I see I was mistaken."

There was a bunch of luggage lying around. He pushed a big suitcase over and began filling it with different odds and ends. I hiccupped and tried to get a hold of myself.

He paused to run a hand through his hair in a stiff, angry motion. "You're supposed to love me, *maman*." His jaw clenched and he squeezed his eyes shut like he was trying to forget something, then he turned his furious glare on me and shouted. "You're supposed to LOVE ME!"

I hid my face in the carpet and cried. Kylo panted a few times and backed away from me to continue packing. It was so painful going along with what he wanted. I didn't know how long I could keep it up. I wanted to go home and see my mom and Kira.

"I'm sorry," I croaked after a few minutes. "I'm sorry. I'm... I'm scared."

"Scared of what?" he scoffed. "You were always raping *me*."

My first reaction was anger, but I hesitated before telling him off. Freudian slip?

I swallowed, trying to fix my raspy voice. "I'm... sorry?"

"Sorry for what?" Kylo glanced at me like I was nuts and zipped up the first suitcase. "We need to stop by your home before we leave. If any of your family members are home—I'll kill them."

Thank god they were all at work or school. He dragged me to my feet by my wrists and pushed me over the edge of the bed, where I stayed very still and stared at the sliding glass doors. I could see the edge of a ladder and couldn't believe how close I'd come to escaping.

"I love you," I lied as he walked off to pack more. The words felt like poison in my mouth.

He was almost done emptying the drawer. I traced the scars across his back as he bent to pick something up and my spine prickled thinking of how exactly he got them. Cigarette burns, knots from a belt, and muttering about being raped. Maybe his uncle assaulted him or something. He said his mother was from France. She could've fled to protect Kylo.

"Do you?" he replied offhandedly.

"...Yes. I'm sorry I ran away. I was, uh, confused."

"Oh." Kylo zipped up another suitcase and put on a shirt and walked past me to the bathroom. "Confused, hm? Did you not enjoy last night?"

I waited until he was in the bathroom before squirming onto the bed, rolling onto my back. It was hard to sit up straight but I managed to before Kylo emerged in jeans with his hair brushed and cologne on. He eyed me and smiled, licking his lips. The hair on the back of my neck stood up.

"I did," I said.

"Good. I thought so." He dragged me to the edge of the bed to free my wrists and yanked off my shirt. "So, mon chou, if you try to escape or create a scene during our travels, I will kill you and return here to kill the rest of your family. You may think that's impossible, but I assure you, it is not."

I nodded quickly. We'd see about that.

Kylo handed me a bra, t-shirt, and jeans that were not mine. Oddly, they fit—which was creepy. He was watching me that closely? Ick. I put on deodorant and brushed my teeth and brushed my hair. My arms trembled as we walked downstairs and he locked the door behind us. Luke's blood was still on the floor. Kylo wasn't intending on coming back to the States.

"Call your friend Rose." He handed me my phone and kissed my forehead. "Watch what you say, Rey."

Okay... okay. Shaking, I went to Rose's number in my contacts and put the phone on speaker. Kylo whistled and idly wrapped his fingers around the back of my neck.

"Hey, Rey!" chirped my best friend. "What's up? Are you okay? Poe is missing now, too!"

"I'm fine." I looked up at Kylo and he smiled. "Um... hey, can you pick me up from Doctor Ren's place? He and I kind of need a ride to my house. His car broke down."

"Sure! I'll be there in fifteen."

We hung up. Kylo tugged me down the stairs past the two cars and along his driveway. He obviously didn't want Rose seeing the blood in his Audi or Luke's abandoned Toyota. I risked peeking up at his distant blue eyes and pulled my smaller suitcase.

"Should I get clothes?" I asked.

“No. I’ll buy some for you when we arrive. My family lives in Senlis, outside Paris about sixty kilometers. They’re expecting us, but unaware of our situation. Get your passport and we’ll leave for the airport.”

“My mom is going to freak out if I leave for Paris for no reason.”

“Tell her it was a surprise,” Kylo said, rolling his eyes. “After a few weeks, we chose to elope and live there. My friend Erik is coming to clean the house and destroy the cars.”

We stood at the end of the driveway for about five minutes before Rose rolled up in her SUV. She beamed at me and studied Kylo as we got into the car, me in the passenger seat and him in the back. He was a completely different person again: calm, composed, and in control. Whatever happened the past few days was either due to drugs or a severe mental illness.

Rose smiled at him through her rearview. “Hi there, Mr. Ren!”

“Hello.” He smiled back, cocking his head. “Thank you for your help.”

He’d taken my cell so I couldn’t contact anyone else. I wanted to tell Rose everything—how he drugged my and killed our friends and raped me. But I stared ahead instead and didn’t say much.

It was broad daylight but my house felt ominous. Rose waited until Kylo got out of the car to ask me if everything was okay. I smiled and nodded and said we were going on a vacation. She squealed and hugged me, wishing me a safe trip. I stepped out and she drove off, leaving him and I alone.

“Good, good.” Kylo loomed behind me as I opened the door to the house. “Good girl.”

It was dark and quiet inside. I walked through my kitchen, reflecting on all the childhood memories of running inside after swimming in the pool with Poe on my heels. Rose and I met when we were in middle school and she promised not to go after Poe if I liked him. My car keys were in the frog bowl by the table and mom had pinned a note to the fridge asking me to call when I came in.

Kylo wandered around, smiling. “How quaint.” He touched a picture of my father on the freezer and his smile faded. “...Who is this?”

“My dad, Jake. He got into a fight defending a girl on the street and was stabbed.” I shrugged, leaving the kitchen for my bedroom upstairs. “Shit happens.”

It was dead silent, save for the grandfather clock at the end of the hall. Kylo looked around my bedroom with interest, studying the pictures I’d painted when I was younger and my medals and trophies from track. He smiled wryly—I knew he was inwardly laughing at how easily he could catch up to me. Ha ha. Hilarious.

“So, your father,” Kylo continued, “what year did he die?”

“I don’t know, it was like ten years ago. Mom met Rian a couple months after but she waited a long time before they got married.” I opened my desk drawer and found my passport on top. Rian was supposed to take all of us to Italy this year. “I don’t want to talk about it. Can we go?”

“What time does your family start arriving home?”

I shrugged. “Kira gets here at three, Rian and mom get out at four. Why?”

“Ooo, only eleven AM. I have plenty of time.”

Kylo pushed me onto my small, creaky bed and crept on top of me, kissing me and rolling my bottom lip through his teeth. I hesitantly touched his shoulders and he curled an arm under my back to lift me while he tugged back my green sheets. I'd laid there so many times watching movies and laughing with Rose and at night I dreamed of Poe while stifling my moans and touching myself.

Now I had my college professor leaning between my legs and yanking my pants off—who had also killed my friends and held me captive. He kissed along my neck and licked my skin like he needed the salt and we pressed together in my tiny twin bed. I could see a picture of grandma watching me and I tried to casually reach out and push it down, but Kylo irately swatted it off the nightstand and threw my pants on the floor.

He leaned back, unbuttoning his jeans, and pulled them off. "It smells nice in here, Rey. Like cucumbers and..." He returned between my legs and rocked his hard arousal there, inhaling the scent of my pillows. "...Like you. Masturbating? How often?"

I reddened. "No! I don't do that!"

Kylo groped along my nightstand and pulled it open, revealing my random magazines and some tissues and old homework. I wished he had me pushed on my stomach when he murmured in surprise and took out the small vibrator I bought with Rose on a dare. We were both drunk as fuck and being dumb. I used it like... twice, when I was home alone.

"This is for the knots in your back, then, I assume." Kylo leaned his weight on one arm and used the other to press the vibrator at the apex of my thighs. "How often do you touch yourself, mon chou?"

It buzzed loudly and I gripped his shoulders, squirming from the vibration. Kylo was searching my eyes as they rolled back and he smiled when I tried and failed to suppress a whimper.

"I dunno," I mumbled, "like twice a week?"

He clicked his tongue. "That's all? What did you think about? Mr. Dameron?"

"...Uhh... Nope."

Kylo turned the vibrator in a circle and I arched into it. His eyes were hungry. "Do it now. I want to watch."

The vibrator was pushed into my palm and I swallowed and closed my eyes. Fine. I'd fake it. I swept it in small circles, drifting up and down, and just barely let the tip inside me. Kylo watched with rapt attention and I could hear him jerking off on top of me. He touched my hand and groaned.

"Fuck." He rolled me on my stomach and sank inside of me without warning, but I was wet enough that it didn't hurt. He took the vibrator and I whined. "Fuck, Rey." His cock was extra hard and hot, slipping in and out of me, and I found myself pushing back on him.

"Please," I panted, squirming on the vibrator, "please, Doctor Ren." I was half-faking it.

His breath was on my ear and the bed creaked in conjunction with his aggressive thrusts. "You want an A? You'll have to earn it, little whore." His other hand struggled up my shirt to yank one of my breasts free and he rubbed his thumb across my nipple. "What will your parents say when I send you home dripping cum?"

"They'll be... so upset..."

“Mhm.” He rocked harder and I felt my insides squeeze. “They’ll all know you’re mine, Rey. Then when you’re pregnant and swelling up with my son... then you’ll be mine.”

I didn’t know what the fuck was wrong with me, but I panted and finished on the vibration, pulsing around Kylo’s cock inside me. He threw it on the floor and wrapped an arm around my stomach to prop me up at a better angle on my hands and knees. I bowed my head while he pounded into me with his long fingers around my hips. My head swam.

“You’re mine,” he snapped. “Mine. I’ll fucking get you pregnant and you’ll fucking like it.”

“Yes...” I moaned and nodded, reeling from my orgasm. “Yes...”

“Yes *what?*”

My thoughts raced. “...Sir?”

“Good. Good girl, Rey.” His fingers slithered in my hair and he grunted. “I’m going to fill you up now, and you’ll lie there and soak it in.”

I buried my face in the pillows as he did just that, thrusting hard and fast and swelling and spilling inside me. Kylo panted and kissed the back of my head while making a few more jerky thrusts. When did I last take my birth control, anyway? Fuck.

He laughed and started moving inside me again. I felt him stiffening.

“Good girl,” Kylo whispered, “letting me fuck you in your bed. Beg me.”

It was awful. This was my safe place where I went to forget all the bullshit of the day. Now Dr. Ren owned it on top of my body and he was squishing his essence deeper inside my body. I always imagined it was where I’d lose my virginity to Poe.

Tears beaded in my eyes. “Please... Sir.”

“You’re mine, Rey,” he cooed. “You’re mine.”

## I am the master of my fate,

### Chapter Notes

originally pierre has a huuuuuge family but i'm cutting everyone out for the most part

also ok when i went to paris they all dressed like real nice

you know how people fucking dress in the U.S.???? like fucking morons that's how

The drive to the airport was long and horribly boring without a cell phone. I stared out the window for a while at the slush on the streets and the trees racing by and tried counting them to ease the monotony. Kylo was dead silent. I was relieved he hadn't put the CD on. Then again, it didn't seem like it was for casual listening—more like the soundtrack to his sadism.

When an hour had passed I couldn't take it anymore. I groaned and began knocking my head slowly against the cold window, seriously considering opening the door and ending my misery. Why couldn't he have been a more social lunatic? It was like someone took out his batteries.

"Don't make such a fuss," Kylo said offhandedly, slowing to a stop at a red light. "There will be plenty to amuse you on the plane. Perhaps you'd like a puzzle from the airport gift shop, hm?"

I glared at him and reddened at the recent memory of us having sex in my bed. It creaked like crazy and I could hear dogs barking outside while I was trapped in a tiny, dark room with him draped all over me. He kept going until his arms trembled, grunting and groaning and fisting my pillows so hard his knuckles turned white. I just laid there, too scared to move.

I'd been born a coward. It was hard to believe, considering my track record with parties, but I was sort of a spineless jellyfish willing to do whatever other people pleased. It was why I had fallen for Kylo's charms so easily and why I silently let him do what he wanted. That, and I figured it was the only way to live long enough to figure out how to escape.

But I knew I couldn't afford to act meek anymore. If I wanted to survive, I had to be somewhat of a challenge, but only enough to keep his curiosity piqued. Something about me was important to him and it would take a lot of pushing to make him kill me—otherwise, he would've already done it. If I quietly ambled by, doing everything he wanted, never speaking up... would he get bored?

"You never answered my question," I said. "Why did you kill Poe and Miranda?"

Kylo glanced at me irately. "You're rather dense, aren't you? The boy left bruises on you and the girl was collateral. She was not a fan of yours, by the way."

"Yeah... that's probably because she knew I was in love with her boyfriend." I twisted my fingers, frowning. "So... you care about me, then?"

"In a way."

"...I'm not sure if that's a good thing."

"It isn't. Ah, here we are."

The holidays had recently passed but the airport was still busy. Kylo parked in the far side of the lot and took my hand when we got out of the car. I looked up at him, surprised by the touch. He wasn't exactly the hand-holding type.

"We're engaged," he said, tugging me along. "It will make things less suspicious. Our passports are in the bag along with money."

"Money? How much money?"

Kylo didn't answer. I fumed until we arrived in the main building where crowds of people with huge suitcases were rolling by across the highly polished floors. Mothers shouted for their children and fathers sat on benches watching football playing across the flat screen TVs. I pressed closer to Kylo, nervous amid the hubbub, and I thought I felt him shudder.

When we arrived at the gate bound for Paris, Kylo paused and reached into his inner jacket pocket. I waited, oddly calm given the situation, and watched the people running around. It was funny that none of them knew what was happening to me. If I screamed I might've been able to escape.

I felt his fingers on my left hand and turned my attention back to see a silver ring with a noticeably large diamond sliding up my ring finger. I blanched.

"We don't look engaged if you aren't wearing a ring," he said, patting the top of my hand. "Remember, Rey: do as I say."

While we waited in line I stared at the ring. How did engaged women act? Should I be fawning all over him or keep my cool? Kylo was calm and composed so it would make more sense if I acted the same way. If they asked me anything I would defer them to Kylo so I didn't fuck up our story.

I could feel eyes on me. I glanced up from the dazzling ring and straight into Kylo's amused expression. My cheeks burned and I quickly clasped my hands behind my back.

"Women are so fickle," he said.

"If you put a giant sparkling rock on my finger, I'm going to look at it."

"Fickle."

I wanted to insert a derisive comment about his own bad personality traits but we had arrived at the gate and the employee needed our passports. I unzipped the bag and found them right on top and offered them to Kylo, who in turn handed them to the short, balding man. A woman requested my bag so she could look through it and I obediently handed it to her.

We were cleared. I followed Kylo into the receiving room for the flight, nervously clutching my bag, and he seized my free hand in the blink of an eye. There were a few other people waiting but the flight was called and we didn't stay for very long. He pulled me along through the crowd.

I was amazed at how well Kylo could blend with the other people. I'd always seen him as a flicker of light in the dark and he stood out in the crowd like a beacon. But despite that, not many people paid him much attention as he led me down the hall to the plane. He was awfully good at maintaining a low profile for being so attractive. People like him usually couldn't escape attention.

It became more apparent when we boarded the plane and instead of joining the passengers in coach, we stayed in first class. A pretty blonde flight attendant noticed him and she stopped in the middle of offering an older gentleman a drink to watch Kylo walk by.

There weren't many seats and they were all high-backed. We took the ones immediately to the left of the entrance, which were padded with cream-colored upholstery. There was a divider between our huge seats and a countertop with a makeup mirror in case I needed to make myself pretty. Yeah right. I'd stop showering and brushing my teeth just to spite Kylo.

I collapsed in my seat and gawked at it all: there was a flat screen TV that showed the current flight and offered options for movies. Small lamps attached to the counter and the side of my compartment offered some extra light and a little minibar with some teeny bottles of champagne sticking out from the ice. I poked at them, enthralled. How cute!

Kylo took the outer seat and the flight attendant I had noticed was at our side in an instant. Her name was Felicity and she had long, red fingernails. She smiled radiantly at both of us and I sadistically hoped she would try to put her hand on his shoulder. I could see him shifting a bit, also acutely aware she might do so. C'mon, you know you want to...

"Welcome to first class, Miss Kenobi and Mr. Ren," she said. Her voice was at a nervous high pitch. "May I get you anything to eat? A drink, perhaps?"

"I'm fine, thank you." Kylo looked to me. "Rey?"

I picked up one of the tiny champagne bottles and waved it around. "Don't mind me; I'll just be boozin' in my corner."

Felicity smiled tightly and left us.

I popped open one of the bottles and leaned back in my seat to start watching Disney movies. It was gonna be a long flight, but it'd be a touch more tolerable if I was wasted.

I ran through five Disney movies during the incredibly long flight—we had six hours left and I was getting bored of watching the same romance play out over and over. I snuck a clandestine peek at Kylo to see him reclined back with his eyes closed, hands clasped over his stomach. He looked kind of peaceful.

My eyes flickered down to the ring on my finger and I considered taking it off. Surely I wouldn't need it anymore when we reached France? The people controlling the gates at Seattle's airport hadn't been too curious about our engagement so I doubted the foreign country would care much more. I arched my ring finger and was struck with a terrible sense of guilt. He'd killed people.

...It was a pretty ring, though. The band was thin and simple but the diamond in the center practically ejected light everywhere. I wondered how expensive it had been and more importantly, where the hell Kylo got all his money. State colleges didn't pay well enough to buy two first class tickets to France and a new Audi. I narrowed my eyes at the ring. Hm...

I furtively reached into the overhead compartment to remove the bag with the few things Kylo insisted on bringing with us. The nightgown and 'Au Clair de la Lune' CD were right on top but when I moved deeper I felt the unfamiliar touch of money. Luna's hadn't paid particularly well. Curious, I pushed aside the edges of the bag to see exactly how much Kylo had brought along.

It had been rolled into a thick wad and rubber-banded together. I flipped aside the edge of the first bill, which should've been the smallest, and saw a '\$100' sign on the edge. Surprised, I continued flicking through the money and was repeatedly presented with 100s. What the *hell*?!

"Looking for something, Rey?"

I jumped up at the sound of Kylo's voice and puffed up indignantly.



“Can you stop spooking me?!” I snapped.

“No.” He opened one eye and looked at the bag. “What are you searching for?”

“I was curious to know how a professor at a state-funded college has enough money for this—” I gestured at the plane around us “—and this—” I pointed to the ring on my finger “—and the Audi you calmly left sitting in your driveway. Are you a drug runner?”

Felicity arrived before he could answer me. She asked if we wanted anything to eat again and I requested chicken but Kylo politely declined again. When she walked away, he stroked his lips with his fingertips and smirked at me. I zipped the bag shut and returned it to the compartment.

“She wants me,” he murmured when I turned back to face him. “What do you think? Should I fuck her?”

“I hope she touches you.”

The flight attendant returned with my food a few minutes later and I ate eagerly at first but slowed down when I felt Kylo watching me. He leaned his chin into his palm and stared at each piece of chicken I put in my mouth. The plane was so quiet that I could hear my chewing above all else.

“Why don’t you answer my questions instead of watching me eat?” I suggested. “It’s honestly one of the creepiest things you’ve done, just short of drugging me. That’s what you were doing, right?”

“It’s very rude to ask a man how he gets his money. I invest, save, and do my job competently. I do not work for a drug cartel.” He tilted his head, smiling. “Yes, I was drugging you. In your wine and water.”

My spine prickled but I tried not to let my fear show. “How do you get your hands on drugs?”

“There are plenty of people selling them. I keep several. I would drug your wine with Rohypnol, and I gave you and Mr. Dameron GHB. I also gave you GHB the evening you forcibly kissed me. For shame, Miss Kenobi. I was in no place to consent.”

That was the night I had felt different from the others; when I became incredibly horny and happy. The previous two made me black out and get sick so I assumed they were influenced by Rohypnol, not the GHB or whatever Kylo was talking about. I stuffed a green bean in my mouth, scowling.

“You gave it to Poe?” I pressed. “The GHB?”

“Yes. And you.” Kylo’s smiled widened. “You watched me rape him and slash his brainstem open. Aren’t drugs interesting?”

I looked away and focused on eating my dinner.

We descended back into silence until the flight had reached France. I looked out the window at the clouds around us and squinted, trying to see my new home.

The airport terminal looked like any other. Kylo held my hand tightly and rattled off French to passerby who smiled at us, and I was shocked by their friendliness. People kind of avoided looking at one another in America but at least a dozen men and women had said ‘bonjour’ to Kylo and Ime while we walked through the huge airport. I couldn’t believe it.

We passed through customs and I was officially legally permitted on French soil. I looked around and stuck to Kylo’s side like a burr while he idly took out a cell phone and dialed someone. They

spoke for a few minutes and he laughed at one point but I hadn't magically gained the ability to speak French.

It was cold and dark outside but not snowing. There were a ton of people in long, fancy coats and I couldn't help but notice almost all the men wore belts and none of them had anything baggy on. Even in Seattle there were people who looked worse for wear yet that didn't seem to be a problem in Paris. I leaned up on my tiptoes stupidly hoping to see the Eiffel Tower lit up.

A cab brought us to a train station and I kept awkwardly turning in circles to get a look at everything around me. It wasn't so bad. The people were friendly, I was with someone who spoke the language, and their weather wasn't abominable. I shivered and pressed closer to Kylo.

When we were sitting on the train I started to get much antsy. I had no idea where we were going or who I would meet. Was the rest of his family just like him?

"Where are we going, anyway?" I asked.

"Senlis." Kylo glanced at his watch. He was holding the bar above my head and standing possessively behind me so the other passengers couldn't come near.

"Descriptive," I muttered.

The train jolted and I squealed, nearly falling over my own two feet, but Kylo caught me around the waist with his free arm before I made a fool of myself. He said something in French that had 'American' mixed in and a few people snickered in response. I was tempted to bite him.

Though Paris had otherwise impressed me I wasn't sure how I felt about the public transportation system. I'd never liked relying on it but I doubted he would let me get a car. We got off about an hour later at our final stop and I tiredly followed Kylo out of the station and into Senlis.

The cobblestone streets captured my heart immediately. Kylo grabbed my hand again to keep me from straying and I excitedly looked around at the tall, beautiful buildings with vines draping down them. There was a church towering above everything with intricate details towards the top.

There was plenty of light cast by the street lamps and a few children scurried past us, laughing and dressed to the nines. I gazed after them and admired the little girl's pretty green dress before she vanished around the corner with the two boys, both holding onto their hats. I smiled. I'd always liked kids, something I figured I got from mom.

We arrived in front of a huge home that looked more like a castle. It was separated from the others, not an ancient box-shape but instead composed of two large towers that jutted into the street. There was a driveway that wound around to the back and a hedge in the front that had recently been trimmed. Wrought iron gates protected it from curious passerby.

The massive front door suddenly flew open, spilling light into the street, and a woman ran down the steps and across the cobblestone to us. Kylo stepped back, clearly worried she was going to hug him but she darted past him and instead wrapped her arms around my neck.

I was trapped in a sweet-smelling perfume and my face was in thick, black hair that hung in long tresses around the woman's shoulders. Kylo released my hand so I could steady myself and hug her back.

"Welcome to Senlis, Rey!" she chimed. "It's very nice to have you here!"

Kylo tapped his foot. "*Jaina*, what have I told you about needlessly hugging strangers?"

The woman stood back and held my biceps, beaming. She had the same exotic beauty to her that Kylo did but her skin was rather pale instead of tanner like his. Pink lipstick made her plump lips pop even more and the casual outfit she was wearing: jeans, an off-the-shoulder sweater and slouchy boots—didn't detract from her beauty in the least. We were the same height but she was more slender.

"I have to hug someone when you come to visit," Jaina said, brushing something off my shoulder, "and that's off the table with you, so Rey was the unfortunate victim." Her accent was much thicker than Kylo's, but her English was perfect.

Loud squealing interrupted us and two blonde-haired children came flying out of the house next dressed only in matching pink nightgowns. Each one attached to either of Kylo's legs and my eyes widened in shock. Uh oh, didn't Jaina know touching was off-limits?

"Manon! Camille!" Jaina rebuked. "Where are your shoes?!"

They were definitely twins. I watched incredulously as Kylo scooped up the smaller one in his arms and she grabbed his face to kiss him on the temple. The bigger girl was promptly grabbed by Jaina and brought back inside while Kylo and I followed. I continued staring at the little girl resting her head on his shoulder in utter shock. What the *hell*?

Inside, the house opened to a huge receiving room. The floor was black and white tiled and highly polished so it reflected the chandelier overhead. Two enormous staircases curved up to the top floor, ringing by a wrought iron railing. A dog emerged from the room on the right and bounded toward the little girl when Kylo set her down on the floor and she ran off, shrieking happily. The bigger girl clung to her mother and chewed her nails, watching me with hazel eyes.

Jaina put her hand on the child's head. "Rey, this is my daughter, Manon. She was older than her sister by several seconds: Camille is the more rambunctious one. My newborn, Adrien, is asleep upstairs with his father. We're very excited to have you visit! Kylo has never brought a girl here." Her eyes flickered down to my hand. "And with a ring on her finger!"

I was tempted to tell her why but kept my mouth shut and smiled politely. Too soon to make any assumptions about them or their relationship with Kylo.

It was decided we would do the grand tour in the morning after Kylo and I had slept off our jet lag. Jaina was mildly surprised he hadn't brought anything along but didn't linger upon it. She brought us upstairs to the left end of the long hallway where a door with a decorative gold knob was closed. I thanked her for her hospitality and she bid both of us a good night.

The room was dark and huge. A thick beige carpet comforted my aching feet and the curtains on the massive window were closed to keep out the moonlight. There was a walk-in closet and nightstands on either side of the bed that spanned across the room, blanketed in blue sheets. A flat screen TV hung opposite the bed on the eggshell white wall over a tall, ornate dresser. There was a door beside the closet that I hadn't noticed, probably leading to a bathroom. Good. I needed a shower.

When I opened the bathroom door I heard something clink on the dresser across the room. Kylo was standing before it with his sleeves pulled back, watching me. A smile touched the corners of his lips and he began unbuttoning his shirt.

"What?" I asked, shrinking back.

"Are you taking a shower?"

“Duh. I was just in a plane for eleven hours.”

“I’ll join you.”

My hand slipped off the doorknob. “W-What?! No, you won’t!”

He slipped his shirt off and took off the grey t-shirt underneath, placing both on the dresser beside his watch. The low light from the moon cast a shadow across his collar bone and the edges of his hips emerged when he unbuckled his belt.

Kylo cocked his head, smiling. “Are you *blushing* or has the altitude gone to my head?”

I hurriedly slipped inside the bathroom, shutting and locking the door behind me. It was just as over-the-top as the bedroom with a big modern shower that had a waterfall style sprayer in a beam across the top. There were clean pajamas and panties on the sink with a piece of chocolate. Was I in a hotel?

“You have to come out some time,” Kylo purred on the other side of the door. “I’ll be right here waiting when you do. Don’t forget to take off your ring, mon chouchou.”

“I’ll show you a shoeshoe,” I said belligerently.

Fingers ran along the door. “You’re becoming a plucky little thing, aren’t you? I think I’ll keep that smart mouth of yours otherwise occupied this evening.”

While I took my shower, I toyed with different ways I could sleep on the linoleum floor.

## **I am the captain of my soul.**

Steam billowed around me while I dried off after my shower. It helped lift my spirits and a quick brush of the teeth with one of the spares beneath the sink helped, too. I wrapped my hair in a towel and made sure each button on my pajamas was securely fastened. We were in a house with a bunch of family members, so I doubted Kylo would try anything.

But I still moved very slowly when I opened the door. I peered out into the dark room to see Kylo with his back facing me, lying on the bed, and a news report about the Nikolai guy from Rhode Island playing in the background. His face had been plastered everywhere as of late. Kylo was probably one-hundredth as crazy as that dude, and that was saying something.

I tiptoed out of the bathroom to the dresser to let out my hair and rub away the residual moisture. It was nice and warm in the house and I had a lot of questions for Jaina. Was it a childhood home? What did she do for a living? What did her husband do? How long had she known Kylo?

For now, it was safe to ask those kinds of things. I glanced over my shoulder at Kylo, now turned over on his stomach, and traced the lines of the muscles in his back. Would I ever know how many people he had killed? I wasn't sure how I would cope with the day-to-day of living with a serial killer and I didn't know how much time I had left. I bit the side of my mouth ruefully. It could be a few days or years.

When Camille was in his arms she'd grabbed his cheeks to kiss him on the temple. I wasn't jealous of a four year old but more shocked than anything else. Children could touch him. Manon had clamped to his leg until Jaina forced her to let go as well and Kylo didn't bat an eye. I would've thought he hated the roaming, sticky hands on children more than anything else. They were fairly messy and loud; the utter opposite of Dr. Ren.

My eyes widened. What if he'd killed *kids*? Oh god, what if he... did things to them? That could've been why he was fond of Jaina's children running around him like they'd been snorting sugar.

I fanned out my hair and shook my head as I walked to the bed. There were so many variables at play; so many places where my thought processes could derail and send everything out of control. I carefully crept underneath the covers beside Kylo and noticed his hair was damp. He'd showered elsewhere.

"Good," I muttered, "now I don't have to deal with you."

My eyes closed and I drifted off to sleep... To be awoken some time later being dragged out of bed by my hair.

Bewildered by my exhaustion, I could only blink stupidly as I collapsed on the floor in a heap of limbs with foreign fingers knotted in my hair. I panted in fear and twisted my neck to see Kylo pulling me into the huge closet, covered in a sheen of sweat. His eyes looked vacant.

The floor was empty and the door shut behind us. I scrambled backwards, afraid he was going to kill me, and Kylo climbed on top of me, wrestling down my flailing limbs and covering my mouth when a faint cry escaped from within. He leaned his weight on me, nuzzling his head underneath my neck like a cat looking for attention.

"Much safer," he sighed, deep voice rumbling. "He won't find us here."

I squeezed my eyes shut as he yanked down my pants in the darkness until they draped by my

ankles. Kylo kept muttering as he tugged his pants to his hips and I stiffened when he nudged between my legs, already hard and dripping precum. His hand was sealed over my mouth and my tears ran over his fingers as he pushed inside me, straining closer, nosing in my hair.

“Quiet, maman.” Kylo grunted against my neck and my back scraped on the carpet.

It didn’t take him long to finish. His jaw clenched next to my ear and he took ragged breaths through his nose, trying to keep his voice down as he throbbed inside me. I kept my hands at my sides.

Kylo caught his breath and nodded. “Good. Good.” He pulled out, trembling, and fixed our clothes. “Let’s sleep.”

Somehow, I fell asleep.

“Mama, Uncle Kylo is doing it again.”

“Hush, Manon. Go start breakfast with everyone.”

I groggily opened my eyes to see Jaina standing at the closet door in a long white nightgown with her arms folded over her chest. Her eyes were wide but she smiled faintly when our gazes met.

I’d turned on my side during my sleep and there was a mess of black hair underneath my chin. Confused, I blinked blearily a few times and registered my arms were wrapped around another person’s body who was still breathing with the soft inhalations of sleep. I realized with dread exactly who it was.

Kylo had curled into the fetal position during his sleep. His arms weren’t around me but were coiled back, hands splayed over top of one another in an exact mirror on an infant in the womb. I immediately let go and Jaina jerked back like she was afraid he might explode.

“Be very careful,” she whispered. “He mustn’t know you saw him like this.”

It was frightening and sad seeing him in such a position. I gently released him and wriggled away to give myself enough space to stand up and Kylo didn’t stir. Jaina stepped back to let me out of the closet but I paused to watch him one last time, wondering what the hell kind of trauma had led to his behavior. Maybe it was better for me to never know.

We left the room on tiptoes and closed the door behind us. Only then did I heave a sigh of relief and know we had escaped. He would wake up alone and think none of us knew.

“Has he been doing that for very long?” Jaina asked. She covered her mouth and paused in the middle of our walking. “Oh, I’m so sorry! That’s none of my business.”

I shrugged. “It’s alright, I’m getting accustomed to his... um... quirks. I’ve noticed he has a thing for closets, though. I’m not really sure why.”

“...I see.” Jaina escorted me down the stairs, furrowing her brow. “We’ve been having Kylo visit since Aunt Leia died when he was 16. My grandparents didn’t know of his existence until the American courts alerted them. Leia was not welcome home but they were eager to accept Kylo. Anyway, over the years I’ve seen him do that several times. It’s gotten worse.”

We walked down to the enormous kitchen that had a rustic wooden floor and all sorts of historic décor. It was big, probably amassing one whole side of the lower floor, and a blonde-haired man with an apron was standing in front of the open-range stove. He turned to acknowledge us and

beamed at Jaina. Manon and Camille were standing by his legs watching him cook and baby Adrien was hanging from his back with his head lolled lazily to the side.

Jaina smiled. "Rey, this is my husband, Tobias. He is a German immigrant who I had the fortune of meeting during one of my trips to Paris."

"Guten Morgen," Tobias said, waving the spatula in his hand in friendly greeting. His voice was rough, much different from Kylo's and Jaina's. "It's lovely to have you here, Rey. Would you like anything in particular for breakfast?"

"I wanna make pancakes for Aunt Rey!" Manon insisted, leaning up on her tiptoes.

"Me too!" squealed Camille.

I laughed and nodded. "Pancakes sound great. Thank you, girls."

Jaina sat down with me at the antique wooden table, complete with a matching set of carved chairs. It was beautiful. Parts of the kitchen were still made of stone from when the home had been built and there was a sliding glass door leading out into their backyard. The dog wagged his tail in front of it until Manon let him out and she watched with delight as he ran around in the grass.

It was extremely hard to believe a serial killer had come from such a pleasant family.

"This is a gorgeous house," I said.

Jaina brightened. "Thank you! It belonged to my grandparents. My grandfather was a decorated war hero who invested well and grandmother was a brilliant scientist. We think that's where Kylo got it from."

"What do you do?" I asked. "And Tobias?"

"Tobias stays home with the girls. I'm a realtor and quite good at what I do." She grinned and looked over her shoulder at Camille standing beside Tobias, carefully making pancakes. "He's a much better homebody than I am. I'm not sure if I can even sew, let alone cook."

"Me neither. I'm terrible with those kinds of things."

We chatted for a long time about general things: how I liked France, what I was studying in school, and how long I intended to stay. I wasn't sure if I should mention Kylo and I were 'engaged' so I didn't bother mentioning it and instead detailed how we had met while I was in his astronomy class. Jaina laughed at loud when I told her he had been the one to encourage me.

Manon suddenly spun around and shrieked. "Uncle Kylo!"

I watched as the little girl darted from the glass doors to the doorway of the kitchen and leapt into Kylo's arms, causing him to stumble back. Jaina wasn't concerned, Tobias only chuckled to himself, and Camille impatiently climbed down from her stool.

He allowed Manon to kiss him and when he set her down on the floor Camille did the same. Adrien's eyes popped open and he squirmed in his carrier, whining a bit. Jaina rose to tend to him and Kylo sat in the seat on the other side of me, rubbing his eyes tiredly. He had put the grey shirt back on and black sweatpants. He glanced over his shoulder to see if anyone was watching before leaning close to me, sliding his palm over my thigh.

"You're lucky I fell asleep last night," he murmured. "When I find a home for us—"

“Oh, Kylo!”

Both of us turned when Jaina’s voice interrupted his threat. She held up an official-looking envelope with some French written on it and smiled.

“I suppose I should visit the bank this afternoon,” he said.

“I highly suggest it.” Jaina held a cup of coffee between her long fingers and smiled. “I think I’ll bring Rey to Paris while you work out the finer details of grandmother’s inheritance. Don’t you?”

“Sounds good to me!” I said quickly.

Kylo rubbed his beard and glared down at me while I ate. Manon sat on my other side and Camille insisted on sitting in Kylo’s lap and played with his watch while he ate. It was perplexing to me that he was comfortable with the kids being all over him. *Why?*

We finished breakfast and Jaina brought the girls to their bedroom on the other end of the hall to get them ready for the day. They were staying with Tobias for the afternoon so Jaina and I could have a quiet day of shopping in the City of Lights. I lagged behind Kylo, running my fingers along the freshly painted walls and admiring how beautiful the house was. I’d have to explore it later on.

There were clothes already waiting on the bed. I turned around a few times, wondering if the Organa home housed ninjas. That was Kylo’s grandparents’ last name. It had a nice ring to it. His mother had been ‘Leia Organa’ before she married and became Solo. Kylo changed his name when he turned eighteen.

“Who keeps putting out these clothes?” I asked, checking out the pretty outfit.

“The maid, I would assume, unless my cousin has gained the ability to phase through walls.” Kylo stood behind me and put his hands on my shoulders. “Enjoy your time in Paris, Rey.”

“Could you repeat that without sounding creepy?”

His fingers closed around the back of my neck and squeezed. “Enjoy your time in Paris, *Rey*.”

“Okay, now I know you’re threatening me.”

“We’re going to be quite a few miles apart and that upsets me. I wouldn’t want you... wandering off in the direction of the airport, or perhaps following a nice man with some shiny trinket into an alleyway. Being unaware of your precise position is uncomfortable.”

“Too bad?”

“I suppose. I can’t exactly refuse Jaina without causing a stir.” He tightened his grasp again and I felt his breath on my collar bone. “I loathe not being in control. I sincerely hope you enjoy this taste of freedom while it lasts.”

I struggled away from him, stumbling around the side of the bed. Kylo’s cold blue eyes followed me all the way to the bathroom with my clothes draped over my arm. My heart was racing.



# Purgatory

## Chapter Notes

nanananaaaaa! i have a sequel for this story, too, but it's really depressing lmao

When I emerged from the bathroom, Kylo promptly offered me the entire bundle of money from the bag. He was dressed and had shaved a bit but that only made the cocky smile on his mouth even more infuriating. I slapped his hand away and stormed to the dresser to check my hair one last time in the small mirror. I was beginning to hope he would kill me. All the stupid games he played were infuriating.

Kylo walked up behind me; idly tossing the wad of money up and down like it was a very expensive baseball. “Why are you so aggressive today, mon chouchou? I’d like you to find something pretty for our first evening together in our new home. Preferably something that will tear easily.”

“I’m not taking money from you.”

“You accepted the ring easily enough.” He cocked his head and I felt his fingers slide into the hem of my jeans. “We could work out a more suitable arrangement. Would your conscience feel cleaner if I slid money in your panties while you danced for me? A service for a service.”

I put an extra bobby pin in my up-do, fuming. “Will you leave me alone? I’m going to be in your dirty basement all day so who cares what I wear?”

“Well I won’t keep you there all day. That would be inhumane.”

I turned around to push past him and Kylo pinned me against the dresser. He brushed a stray lock of hair from my face and pushed the wad of money between my breasts, making sure to pat them tauntingly before letting me go. He strode across the room to his jacket and watched me angrily withdraw the money to shake it in the air.

“Someone will murder me for this!” I spluttered. “Is that what you’re going for?”

“You’re right. Give me half to put in the bank. I might as well while I’m there this afternoon.”

*“That’s still too much goddamn money for me to carry!”*

He pulled on his jacket and rolled his eyes. “Fine. Come here.”

As promised, most of the money was taken but that still left me with way too much. I kept my hand on it while Jaina and I rode the train to Paris and furtively glanced about. I stood out like a sore thumb. Jaina was calm and gazing out the window as the landscape raced past but I was shifting on my feet, examining the train car with wide eyes. I screamed ‘tourist’.

The city was like any other major metropolis: parts were stunning and others were lackluster. Jaina knew her way around very well and kept me from getting into trouble, including dragging me away from pickpockets. I liked her a lot. She was down to earth and reasonable and much easier to talk to than Kylo, of course. It was a relief to be in the company of another woman.

We went to several stores and I picked out a few things but tried to keep my spending down to a minimum. I knew I would feel awkward carrying tons of bags around. Jaina did some shopping herself, mostly new clothes for Manon and Camille, who were constantly getting dirty outside.

Around four o'clock we settled down in a small restaurant for an early dinner and squealed over all the cute baby clothes Jaina bought for Adrien. He was a cute little thing and I was excited to go back to her home to hold him. Babies were cute when I could hand them back to their parents.

Jaina popped a piece of chicken in her mouth, smiling. "So, that's a nice ring you're wearing."

I glanced down at the 'engagement' ring Kylo had given me. It was a farce but seemed to work well. Why else would he bring a woman all the way from the United States to live with him?

"Yeah," I said, "it is."

"Are you two engaged, then?"

I shrugged sheepishly and spun my pasta around my fork. "I'm not really sure. Kylo is kind of confusing and vague sometimes. It doesn't matter to me either way."

"You remind me a lot of our cousin Alexandre. You two would probably get along very well, but Kylo and Alex aren't the best of friends. I'm not sure why... maybe they're too serious for one another. Quentin would like you, too." She looked up and nodded, scrutinizing me. "Yes, definitely. He would."

"Who's Quentin?"

"Alex's son. He's a single father—Quentin's mother left them when he was small."

Huh. I was used to hearing stories about dad's abandoning their kids, but not the other way around. We ate quietly for a few more minutes before I decided to ask about Kylo.

"What about Kylo's mom?" I asked, trying to be casual. "She moved to the U.S., right?"

A weird look passed over Jaina's face. She nodded, averting her eyes from mine.

"Yes. Aunt Leia was a very troubled woman. After Alex was born my grandparents were worried due to her... proclivities. There was a panic when they learned of Kylo and they tried their best to remove him from the situation, but American courts are impossible to deal with."

"...What situation?"

A gentle tap on the window interrupted Jaina. Both of us looked over to see Kylo standing outside with one hand on his pocket and the other still suspended to knock again. I glared at his dark blue eyes. What happened with Leia? Why were they worried when Alex was born?

"Not a word of this to Kylo," Jaina whispered urgently as he entered the restaurant.

I nodded and moments later he slid into the seat beside mine. He kissed me chastely on the temple and my skin crawled where his lips brushed.

"I assume your outing was enjoyable?" he asked.

"Very!" Jaina said, perking up. "I bought the cutest little shoes for Adrien. Quentin's birthday is coming up as well so I bought him some toys and whatnot. Will you go to his party, Kylo?"

Kylo scowled. “No.”

“You’re so miserable sometimes. When you and Rey have children, no one will want you present.”

I immediately started choking on the chicken in my mouth. Kylo offhandedly patted me on the back until I got a grip and heaved for air, clutching my throat. *Jesus Christ*. There was nothing more horrifying than the thought of raising the hellspawn of Kylo Ren.

“She startles easily,” he said when Jaina began to apologize.

Dinner was otherwise uneventful. We paid our tab and left for Senlis with our new things and Kylo chatted with Jaina most of the way. He was such a social butterfly with his family. I sourly stared at my reflection and for a moment, I could see the gaping skull drowned in his personal graveyard.

Nothing justified taking innocent lives. No trauma or shyness could ever excuse Kylo for needlessly killing innocent people. I watched him talk with Jaina from the corner of my eye and shifted my bags. He’d never told me exactly how many people he killed, but I assumed they were all women. He had it out for us. Kids were fine and even men weren’t on the radar. Women were his prey of choice.

My confusing feelings for him couldn’t get in the way. I had to either devise a plan of escape or figure out how to fix him, if that was even possible. It didn’t seem like it was. He had a penchant for closets and ‘Au Clair de la Lune’ and he only drugged me for the feeling of control.

Something very frightening would be waiting for me when Kylo bought a house. It was important that I clung to what I had and braced myself for what was going to come.

When we arrived home Manon and Camille were on Kylo in seconds and nearly dragged him to the ground. I walked along with Jaina, enjoying the early nightfall, when I suddenly remembered a word I desperately wanted translated. I touched her elbow and she paused, head tilted.

“Can you tell me what ‘maman’ means?” I asked. “And ‘chouchou’.”

She puckered her lips. “Well, ‘chouchou’ is a term of endearment. It has several meanings but usually means ‘pet’ or ‘darling’. ‘Maman’ is our version of ‘mom’. It’s informal. ‘Mère’ is our version of ‘mother’. Why do you ask? Ooo, does Kylo call you ‘chouchou’? Très mignon!”

A cold shiver rippled down my spine. Okay... that made everything a hell of a lot weirder. He’d mumbled it a few times when we were fooling around and... oh, it was too *weird*. I folded my arms over my chest and followed him with Jaina, watching with increasing revulsion as he held Manon and Camille’s hands. Maybe he was a pedophile. I could’ve been a stand-in or something.

Tobias waved to us with a spatula when we came inside. “Alexandre and Quentin stopped by! Quentin’s upstairs if you’d like to meet him, Rey.”

Kylo was dragged into the kitchen by the girls and Jaina followed them, insisting they let him go.

I walked up the elegant staircase to the second floor and dropped off my things in the bedroom. There were two more bedrooms on my side and another bathroom, and on the opposing side there was a door to the master bedroom and two doors facing each other down the hall. A third door closer to the stairs caught my attention and I heard voices inside, prompting me to open the door.

It was a large playroom with a thick blue carpet and too many toys to count. There were things from pillar to post, organized neatly but nonetheless covering every square inch of the place. I stepped over a train set and approached a little kid sitting alone, putting a puzzle together.

He had light brown hair and eyes that were so light blue they seemed grey. He blinked at me a few times. It had to be Quentin. He looked about six years old.

“Hi,” I said after a beat. “I’m Rey, Kylo’s... girlfriend. It’s nice to meet you.”

“Dad told me Uncle Kylo only dates men, though,” Quentin said innocently.

I laughed and sat down behind them, curious to see what they were doing. “I sort of assumed the same thing when I met him. What are you up to?”

It was a 1000-piece puzzle. Quentin was a chatty little thing and launched into a story about school and homework. The door opened a while later and Quentin turned, immediately brightening.

“Hi, dad!”

A tall man was peering into the room but stepped inside when he noticed his son. He had slightly curly brown hair and a thick beard. He was attractive—that much I had to admit—and was wearing a grey sweater with khakis. His features were softer than Kylo’s—less predatory and sharp. Quentin leapt to his feet and ran over to hug his father.

“I’m Rey,” I said when he finally looked at me. “Nice to meet you.”

Alex sat beside me on the floor, brow furrowed. Quentin took his spot across from us.

“I thought Jaina was joking when she told me he was bringing someone home,” he said. He had no trace of an accent. “You’re an American, right? Washington State? Did you like it there?”

“For the most part. I like being outside and that’s a year-round thing there, so it was nice being able to go hiking or snowshoeing or kayaking whenever I wanted.” I puckered my lips and slid a piece of the puzzle into place, pleased with myself. “What about you? Big fan of France?”

But Alex didn’t seem to hear my question. “You like to hike?”

“Yeah. Being outside in general is nice.”

“You’ll have to come to the Alps, then. I would say we could attempt Mont Blanc but I think that’s a bit too much for you. The lower elevations are still—”

“I didn’t notice you slither upstairs, Alexandre.”

Kylo was leaning casually on the doorframe with his arms folded, smiling plaintively at all of us. He had pushed back his sleeves to expose his forearms and kept his eyes trained exclusively on my new friend. I shrank away from Alex, worried we were too close to touching.

Alex rolled his eyes. “Great to see you, Kylo. Quentin and I were just leaving. It was nice meeting you, Rey. I’ll ask Jaina to keep us in touch so I can show you outdoor activities in France that don’t involve staring at the night sky.”

They left, abandoning me with a mildly agitated Kylo. I wrung my hands uncomfortably before returning to the puzzle and continuing to work on it like nothing ever happened. At least my brief encounter with Alex and Quentin was pleasant. I wanted the family to like me—it increased my odds of staying alive.

Then Kylo was sitting beside me, resting his chin in his palm. He watched me struggle to complete the damn thing for a few minutes without saying a word. It was incredibly unsettling.

“Don’t you want to socialize?” he murmured.

I shrugged. “Maybe later. I don’t want to intrude on anything.”

“Mhm. They all seem to like you.”

“That’s nice.”

Kylo’s fingers slowly closed around the back of my neck. I froze in the middle of putting down a new piece of the puzzle.

“Alex likes you a bit *too* much,” he said.

I clenched the puzzle piece in my hand. “We talked for all of five minutes. And, you know, I have a bone to pick with you. Why are you calling me mommy?”

The tips of his fingers began to curl around my throat. “Hm? I’ve no idea what you’re talking about.”

It wasn’t the time to press for more answers. I grimaced in pain when his hold tightened further and we were suddenly interrupted by a small creak at the door.

Kylo’s hand withdrew from my neck in an instant but there was no one there.

# Glass Castle

## Chapter Notes

vulnerable psychopaths are my kink

kylo's pov will be rare from here on out btw

don't really need it anymore and it'll interrupt the flow of da story

The longer I stayed around Kylo's family, the more confused I became. We all had dinner together and while they had mild incidents like any other family, they were all perfectly polite and very easy to talk to. Jaina snickered to one another when I admitted I was a bit of a space nerd like Kylo. He rolled his eyes and took small sips of his wine.

Things settled down after dinner and I met Jaina's parents, Ines and Evan. Ines smiled gently at Kylo who seemed largely uninterested in his aunt. She was short but otherwise looked like an older version of her daughter. She was also quite friendly and we discussed the ring Kylo had forced on me.

It was getting harder and harder to remember what he was. He had taken me from my family and all that I had ever known for almost two decades, murdered a man in front of my eyes, slaughtered my best friend and his girlfriend, and I had no idea how many other bodies he had piled up in his swamp. But it still felt like a dream. It was impossible to imagine him slicing off Miranda's hands while he sat quietly with Camille in his lap as she drifted off to sleep.

The memories of him deliberately drugging me were clear enough to keep me levelheaded, though. I nursed my wine and watched him in my peripheral vision while chatting with Ines and Jaina. Manon was sitting in my lap, twisting my 'engagement' ring around on my finger. No matter how prim and proper he was on the outside, Dr. Ren was an undeniably deranged man.

*He destroyed your life*, I reminded myself, watching him running his fingers through Camille's feathery hair. *Don't forget that for a second. Your entire life has been uprooted and he doesn't care.*

The family left quietly and the girls were brought upstairs for bed. Tobias and Jaina bid us goodnight and left as well with their fingers linked together, each supporting one of the twins. I watched with a twinge of jealousy—would I ever experience that kind of love?

Kylo rose from the couch and cracked his neck. We were sitting in the living room on the opposite side of the kitchen, where the formal dining room was visible. There was a fake fireplace flickering in the background with a stone bench curved around it. A shelf supported tons of family photos.

The floor was carpeted in a deep maroon shade and a few expensive paintings of different scenery hung from the walls. It was densely furnished to make the huge space feel smaller and we were sitting on one of the any couches scattered about. I stretched my arms toward the ceiling and yawned contently.

"I'm going to bed," I said. "Are you going out to terrorize the townfolk?"

“Senlis is far too dense. I have nowhere to hide a body, and I’m quite certain you will satiate me very well, Rey.” He rubbed his chin, examining me. “I’m going to have a smoke before going to sleep. Care to join me outside?”

I stuck out my tongue in revulsion. “Gross, you smoke? No thanks.”

“Yes, it is by far the worst of my habits,” he said sarcastically.

Obedient as always, I went outside the sliding glass doors in the kitchen with him, crossing my arms over my chest in the cold. There was a brief flicker of light before his cigarette was lit and I watched with my nose crinkled as he took a long drag from it. His eyes caught mine.

“You’re going to get lung cancer,” I said.

Kylo released a plume of silvery smoke into the cold air. “So be it.” His eyes shifted away to scan the dark backyard that dimly illuminated by the moon.

“I’m just warning you, that’s all. Karma is too stacked up against you for anything else to happen.”

“Probably.”

I fidgeted with my sweater. It was from some place with a fancy name. Jaina had brought me to so many that I hardly remembered exactly where each piece of clothing was from.

“Exactly how many people have you killed, anyway?” I asked, faltering when the dreaded ‘k’ word came up. The air felt colder.

Kylo shrugged indifferently like I’d asked him what kind of salad dressing he liked. The end of his cigarette lit up bright orange and he showed no signs of feeling cold in the miserable weather. I’d noticed he was numb to pain in general and absently wondered if it was the same with pleasure. Maybe he was violent with women because he was difficult to stimulate.

I blushed a bit, recalling him burying the hot and hard answer to that rumination inside me several times. Kylo was definitely easy to arouse.

“I began at eighteen,” he said after exhaling more smoke. “A handful every year.”

“All the serial killers who get caught only killed maybe fifty and they always make mistakes. That’s... that’s so many innocent people...”

“I’m meticulous.” Kylo held up his hand, wiggling his fingers. “I destroyed my fingerprints long ago as well, and I do not bring women to my home. In the event my little graveyard was discovered I tore out their teeth and burned their fingerprints off as well.”

I stepped back. “All those women... gone, because of you.”

He smiled and flicked his ashes. “Plus four men. But they aren’t subjected to the worst bits. Most of them were simply in the way.”

I’d already asked too much to handle. I tried to walk around him but he grabbed my arm and turned to shove me against the house, still idly smoking. He flicked his ashes to the ground and smiled fiendishly as he held the cigarette limply between his index and middle fingers.

“What the hell are you doing?” I hissed.

Kylo clamped his hand over my mouth. “I need to put out my cigarette before we can go to bed.”

Blistering pain in my right hip ripped a shrill scream from my throat and I thrashed wildly against him. The cigarette chewed through my flesh, melting and eroding my skin with incredible heat pinpointed in a very small area. I struggled to push him away but it was no use, forcing me to bear the unbearable and wait for the cigarette to burn itself out. Tears leaked down my cheeks all the way to his fingers.

He caught me when my knees wobbled. "I don't like when you ask so many questions."

Dear god, *the pain*. I struggled to compose myself but it felt like someone had lit my flesh on fire and it was gnawing its way around my hip bone. Kylo sighed and hoisted me into his arms like I was a blubbing infant, disposing of the cigarette butt on the way in the garbage.

In our dark room he dropped me on the bed and forcibly pulled off my new clothes until I was left in my underwear. I turned over on my stomach to cry into the pillows, terrified someone would hear me, and presently heard Kylo removing his belt. I'd become conditioned to fear the sound and I covered my head with my hands, trembling. My hip was aflame with agony that seemed to have no end.

"Shh," he whispered. "We don't want to wake the children, mon chou."

I panted in fear as he draped across my back, flattening me into the bed with his weight. He was still dressed as far as I could tell, and I felt his warm breath on my ear. He smelled faintly of cigarettes.

Kylo silently slipped a hand underneath me and down the front of my panties between my legs. His deep voice lulled into quiet murmurs reminding me to keep my voice down as his fingers stroked through my folds. Still crying softly, I rolled my hips into his touch, drawing sharp pain from the burn on my hip. He kissed along my jaw and slowed his already torturously languid pace.

"When we settle in to our new home..." Kylo pushed two fingers inside me and I clenched my jaw. "I will show you exactly how I dispatch my prey."

"I don't want to... I don't want to see..."

He turned me over on my back so I was forced to look into his eerie, vacant eyes. He scanned my face like a machine reading a set of code and dipped his lips to my ear again. I closed my eyes, fighting back more tears as he wordlessly tugged my panties past my knees and freed himself from his pants. Kylo rocked against me and since he'd been touching me, I assumed he wanted the same. Trembling, I slipped a hand between us and curled my tentative fingers around his length.

It was hot and hard but I only felt it for a few seconds before Kylo made a choking sound and jerked away from me. His eyes were wide and terrified and he stumbled out of bed to get away from me, staring like I'd slapped him across the face. I slowly sat up and stared back at him, perplexed.

"Fuck," he spat. He staggered like he was drunk and pressed a hand to his forehead, gritting his teeth. "Fuck... FUCK!"

It was a bizarre thing watching Kylo fly into an episode. I shrank back as he muttered under his breath and my heart skipped a beat when he flung the closet door open. No, no...

He stood there, now breathing so hard his shoulders were rising and falling, then turned to fixate his wide, glassy gaze on me. I was beginning to piece together the traumatic puzzle. Calling me 'mommy,' spinning into hysterical fits, hiding with me in closets... The hatred of being touched,



especially *there* of all places, and the nightmare where he woke up screaming.

*“You’re supposed to love me, maman.”*

*“Scared of what? You were always the one raping me.”*

For a moment, I didn’t see the frigid, sharp eyes of a predator—just a scared little boy whose mother had betrayed him, and it turned my entire world upside down. I slowly shook my head, covering my mouth with a trembling hand. That was why his grandparents fought so hard to get Kylo away from his mother. She was *molesting him*.

There was a tentative knock on the door. “Um... Is everything alright?”

Kylo’s head snapped towards Jaina’s voice and I scrambled out of bed to calm him down before he did something stupid. My heart was racing a mile a minute; I felt sick touching his forearms, like I was violating him, too. But he leaned into me and wrapped his arms around my waist like he’d drown if he let go. His chin hooked over my shoulder as he began humming the lullaby and I struggled to support his weight.

“We’re fine!” I called in an unconvincing tone. “Kylo had a nightmare.”

Jaina peered inside and blanched when she saw us. I shook my head quickly and waved for her to leave as her crazy ass cousin began weighing me down to the floor. She mouthed ‘are you okay’? Stupidly, I nodded. I was still processing the horrible realization I’d just come to.

She left and I sat on the floor with Kylo draped in my lap like an oversized toddler. My chest tightened when he started crying into my stomach and he leaned back, cheeks streaked with tears, to pull me into the closet with him. I had no idea what it all had meant before and now I was totally fucking overwhelmed. This psychopath who murdered Poe and Miranda and tons of other innocent women was a victim, too, and he was *crying*.

The episodes where he lost control of himself had to happen when the trauma was brought back. I wondered what else would trigger him as Kylo nuzzled his head under my chin and pulled a blanket over us. I swallowed hard and drew my fingers through his black hair and he cried for a few more minutes until his breaths slowed and he fell asleep.

I laid there in absolute terror with his tears drying on my chest. Holy shit. I was fucking doomed.

## The Little Death

Duct tape over my mouth woke me in the pitch-black closet.

Kylo was still mid-hysteria—I could tell by his wide vacant eyes—and muttering under his breath as he rolled more tape around my wrists. He pulled me out of the closet and swept through the room like he was doing a final check, loosely snapping his fingers and pacing, accounting for everything. We were obviously leaving. Jaina was going to have a barrage of concerns in the morning.

Oh well. I'd hoped to live a bit longer, but... this was probably the end. I slumped in Kylo's arms when he scooped me up and we left the house without another word.

A thin mist clung to the dark streets outside. I thought of how pretty it would look when the sun was coming up, sparkling off the dew, as I was dumped in the backseat of a car. All the old, elegant buildings across Senlis would look beautiful dappled in sunshine and fog. Like a dream.

Kylo kept muttering while he drove but I ignored it, head lolling around lazily with each bump in the road. What the hell was I going to do? There was nothing *left* to do, other than wait for him to kill me. I closed my eyes and wondered if I'd see dad when I died. Would I see anything, or would I fade into blackness like the rest of Kylo's victims?

Wherever we were going was a long way away. I was too drained to even address what I'd figured out earlier in the night; too spent from my short time suffering under Kylo Ren's thumb. Soon none of it would matter anymore. I'd be free from this fucked up, insane situation.

The car rolled to a stop. Kylo hoisted me out of the backseat, again drooping me over his shoulder like a sack of potatoes and mumbled to himself while carrying me through a dark, desolate forest. Soon we were walking up a set of stairs and I smiled a bit into the duct tape. Same shit, different country.

It seemed like the house was smaller than the one in Washington, but Kylo didn't take me on the grand tour. We went straight to the basement with no further pretense. I hung limply over his shoulder, staring at each creaky step as we descended into another musty, dank iteration of hell. Maybe he'd leave my body to rot down here and someone would find my bones in the corner years later.

Somewhere in the darkness, I heard a woman crying. I frowned as Kylo dropped me into an old, torn-up green and white lawn chair and squinted towards the voice to make out something in the shadows. He pulled out an enormous knife to cut through the duct tape around my wrists and handcuffed me to each armrest of the chair, then skulked off without saying another word. My heart skipped a beat when the crying woman started screaming instead.

"...Gonna kill you," he sang, voice echoing eerily through the basement.

An awful sound followed; something I'd never heard before, like a squelch with a small gasp. Chains jangled and I strained in my chair as the sound of shuffling came closer and closer...

A skinny girl with brown hair was crawling on her hands and knees towards the stairs with an arm wrapped under her stomach. Blood oozed through her fingers, dripping a trail on the floor as she cried and struggled forward. My breath caught when Kylo emerged from the darkness a few feet behind her with the knife dangling from his fingers, now covered in blood. His blue eyes were hazy

and unfocused, watching the woman trying to escape with her stomach cut open.

She collapsed with her fingers reaching for the bottom step. I stared with increasing terror as Kylo rolled her on her back and knelt between her legs. He raised the knife and my eyes widened. Oh no.

“Now I’m gonna cut you open,” he whispered, knuckles turning white on the knife’s hilt, “and play with your insides.”

Panicked, I started thrashing in the chair and shrieking into the tape to distract him. He glanced at me and instead of butchering the dying girl, drove the knife right through the left side of her chest. Her head lolled to the side, blue eyes rolling back in her head, and he ripped the knife back out of her.

I shrank back when Kylo rose from the floor, shirt stained with fresh blood, and he staggered towards me to collapse on his knees in front of my chair. His hands were dripping gore that he smeared all over me in his haste to check on why I was panicking being restrained to a chair. I squeezed my eyes shut, panting when he clasped his bloody hands over mine.

“You... don’t like this, maman?” He shifted closer, eyes wide and wild. “I had to. I didn’t want to hurt you instead.”

Kylo yanked open the buttons on my pajama top and leaned forward to draw my nipple into his mouth. My fingers arched like talons, scratching the cracked wooden armrests in distress, and I heaved into the duct tape as his grasp tightened on my wrists. The girl on the floor took a final rattling breath as he rolled his tongue across my nipple and sucked like he had back in Washington.

It turned my stomach even more now that I knew he was actually thinking about his mother. I didn’t want to think about what she did to him. I resisted the way my body responded to his lips and tongue tugging on my nipple; I tried to keep my muscles tight and unrelenting even though they uncoiled and a sense of calm settled across my thoughts like a suffocating blanket. It did not feel good. It wasn’t relaxing. I focused on the scratching of his beard and the pressure of his fingers around my wrists.

Kylo grunted and freed me from my restraints. We left the dead woman in the basement as he drew me to the first floor, then upstairs to the second floor. Smaller than his last house. He pulled me a few feet to a bedroom and locked the door before shoving me to my knees in front of the closet.

“Good girl,” he whispered. “Good girl. Take off your shirt.”

Trembling, I shrugged out of my top and watched Kylo produce the red nightgown. He tugged it over my head while I cried into the tape over my mouth. The gown was his mother’s. I wanted to rip it off me and burn it. I had some child molester’s clothes on and her deeply disturbed victim was using me to exact a weird mixture of revenge and satisfaction of his Oedipal complex.

He slid open the white door behind me, eyes unseeing, trapped in whatever psychological trauma he was endlessly struggling to control and experience on his own terms. I crawled backwards into the darkness and found he’d already prepared it in the exact same way he had in his other house. His icy gaze followed me as I cried and sagged into the collection of pillows behind me.

His head tilted. “Why are you crying, princesse? Maman never cried.”

I tried to stop, terrified that he really would kill me if I didn’t fully satisfy his deranged scenario, but it was all too fucked up for me to stop. Kylo slowly sat on the floor at the closet’s entrance and continued to stare at me but it was drifting through, searching for something he needed desperately

but I couldn't give him. Was I his actual mother, or was he trying to twist me into a new mother? He didn't do it when he was lucid.

My heart fluttered in my chest while I waited for him to speak. He kept staring. Sometimes he would blink just once, slow. Silence settled over the house.

Kylo's haunted blue eyes finally drifted down to his blood-soaked hands. He stretched them open and the dried blood made a nauseating sticky sound. My ears rang as he closed them into fists again, then let them hang open in his lap. He was practically drenched in blood. Some was smeared across his forehead and his cheeks and there were flecks on his t-shirt. I swallowed hard.

"I didn't enjoy losing my virginity, either." His voice was hollow like he was reading a script.

Oh god. I didn't want to hear anymore. I shook my head feebly, drawing my legs up, trying to shrink into a ball. I could pull the tape off and scream but that could just set him off.

Kylo didn't look up. "For weeks I tried to conceal my wet dreams—but she found out. I was young and afraid..." He trailed off for a minute, hands beginning to tremble. "...I couldn't keep an erection."

Bile rose in my throat. I'd assumed he lost it torturing someone else. The thought of a young black-haired boy stuffing his sheets under his bed, sweating in fear and watching for his own mother over his shoulder was truly enough to make me vomit. I ripped off the tape, more afraid of aspirating than Kylo's retribution, but he just kept talking.

"I learned to draw from negativity, hoping I could give her what she wanted. I became quiet and obedient." He leaned forward, crawling towards me, ignoring my pleading. "Then, after I killed her and Han... I realized how I could regain control of my body, and my life. No longer would I spend the hours and the days wishing to peel off my flesh and step away from it. No longer would I lie beneath Leia while she played with my body. I could make it mine again."

"Kylo," I begged, "please stop." I cried and pulled back as he tugged off my pajama pants. "I don't want to hurt you!"

"I know, maman. That's why I love you."

I heaved for air as he pushed me on my back into the pillows. He slipped off a strap to expose one of my breasts and craned his lips to my nipple again, sucking in a bizarre, uncomfortable way. It was so disturbing that I screamed and writhed and yanked on his black hair.

"I'M NOT YOUR FUCKING MOTHER!" I shrieked.

Kylo slipped his long fingers inside my panties. He always turned me over on my stomach, but it seemed like the delusion had come full circle and he didn't need to pretend anymore. His hungry blue eyes watched mine as he stroked my nipple with his tongue and pushed his index finger inside me and used his thumb to circle the outside. My body responded again.

"You are," he murmured, shifting to my other nipple. "And you're mine."

It went on for a long time that way. I kept screaming and thrashing while he whimpered and nuzzled closer to me. Kylo pulled off his shirt and pants, stripping naked, which he never did. He whispered in my ear as he shifted between my legs and I felt him press for entrance, hot and hard and sticky. He drew a blanket over us and leaned his weight on mine, panting in my ear.

My screams turned shrill when he slowly rocked inside me, taking his time. It was fucking

horrible. I could feel every small inch he pushed through; I swore I could feel the swollen veins in his dick. Kylo grunted and kept cooing about how much he loved me as he drove deeper, rustling the blankets beneath us and shifting the pillows. No one could hear me anymore. I was at his mercy, sobbing with each eager thrust, swallowing puke when he called me mommy.

I got a hold of myself when Kylo was kissing my neck, groping at my butt to get me at a better angle. He was swelling up and I knew he'd be done soon.

"Kylo," I whispered, "b... baby." Sick.

"Yes?" He nibbled my earlobe, thrusting harder. "Yes, Rey?"

My chest tightened. "I... I haven't taken my birth control."

A low rumble in his throat preceded him resting his forehead on mine. He was smiling. "No?"

"...No."

Kylo searched my eyes, pumping faster. "No? I could put a baby in you, maman."

I stared back at him and realized it was exactly what he wanted. His eyes lit up and he moved as fast as he could, grunting, keeping his blue eyes locked on mine as he came closer and closer to climax. Tears rolled down my cheeks as his gaze flickered back for a moment before he groaned, guttural and deep, and I felt his cock pulse and twitch inside me, spurting cum.

"Fuck," he spat. "Fuck... fuck me."

Being forced to look into his gaze as he experienced pleasure with my body was sickening. He smiled as he came down from his orgasm and shuddered.

All was quiet. Kylo groaned and left a slow, lazy trail of kisses across my collarbone while I went slack underneath him. He sighed happily and nuzzled under my neck, still inside me. I clenched the blankets in my fists and squeezed my eyes shut. Stop. STOP.

"Thank you, maman." He curled closer, rolling his hips. "Lie still. Let our baby settle."

I sobbed as Kylo stiffened inside me again, purring about 'our baby'. His essence slithered through me like poison and he spent more time ensuring I came, too, before filling me with more. He kept going. I wondered if it would ever end.

## Whose woods these are I think I know

The doorbell was ringing.

I flew up in bed, gasping, hair flying everywhere and blinding me. My heart pounded as I clawed my hair from my face to look around the empty bedroom and realized Kylo wasn't lying beside me. All my screaming and crying filtered back to me and rang in my ears as I scrambled out of the sheets soaked with all different bodily fluids. The doorbell rang again as I ran in the bathroom to puke.

"Fuck!" I spat.

I threw stuff on the floor in my haste to find a toothbrush and hurriedly scrubbed away the vomit, then went back to the bedroom to put on Kylo's black dress shirt and some sweatpants. Some stuff was littered on the floor, like torn panties and shirts that he had deliberately ripped off me. I rushed past them, flipping my head forward to ruffle my hair, and padded to the front door.

Alex was standing there in a gray sweater and jeans. He was scratching his beard but turned and smiled when he noticed me, then frowned and widened his eyes as he drank in my appearance. I tried to look casual but I had no clue what kind of marks were on me. Thankfully Kylo preferred brutalizing my back with cigarette burns and bites.

"You look... Nice," Alex said awkwardly. He turned in a circle. "Kylo isn't home?"

"I don't know where he goes, honestly. You can come in if you want."

I'd been upstairs all night with his psycho cousin. A tremble trickled through me as I led Alex out to the kitchen and I kept hearing Kylo's voice and my shrieking and pleading. My ears rang and I went to the fridge like a robot to find food. I hadn't even seen the whole house. I was just going through the motions. It was like I was floating out of my body.

Alex sat at the island. "Jaina said the two of you left in the middle of the night. I was in the area so I figured I'd come see the new house and make sure everything was okay."

*Kylo handcuffs me to the wrought iron headboard on my stomach and casually burns me with a cigarette with his other hand between my legs. I scream until my throat feels like it's bleeding.*

"It's great," I said tonelessly.

"Oh. Well, great." He looked around the kitchen and clasped his hands on the counter. "I was going to go for a hike if you'd like to join me. Quentin is with Jaina and Tobias."

Yeah, right. Kylo would lose his shit. I shrugged, trying to be nonchalant, and grabbed a bottle of water and an apple from the fridge. Yeah, that was the real evidence of him being a psychopath. Who the hell in their right mind would put an apple in the fridge? No one.

"I'm not feeling well," I lied.

Alex rose from his chair and wandered over to stand beside me. His brown eyes drifted across my collarbone and he tilted my chin, raising his eyebrows.

"Guess Kylo likes to bite, hm?" His skin was warm and tan.

My heart fell back out of my throat and I moved away from him. “What’s the big deal?”

Alex lapsed into silence and watched me sit at the island and eat my apple and drink my water. The house was still mostly empty. I was guessing Kylo bought it without telling me, along with the car. Of course it had a bed, though, and a closet filled with pillows and blankets. I chewed my apple and glanced up at Alex still watching me from in front of the sink.

He scratched his beard. “Want to go get lunch, Rey? My treat.”

“Uh...”

After some convincing we decided to go out and walk around Senlis for the afternoon. I didn’t have anything else to do and I figured Kylo would be gone for most of the day, anyway. I was finally going to explore France beyond the designer clothes and shopping.

We went upstairs and Alex stood politely outside the bedroom while I got dressed. I brushed my teeth and tried to do something with my hair, still wracked with nervous tremors. It’d be fine.

“How did you meet Kylo, again?” Alex asked.

“I was deliberately flunking astronomy and he figured me out. He tutored me a few times and uh, I guess things just happened from there.”

“And that was about a month ago?” Alex furrowed his brow like he was confused but I knew he was trying to draw answers from me without being too forward. “It must be very serious for you to move to another country with him in such a short time. And you’re not even twenty yet.”

The ring was sitting on the dresser and I slipped it on my finger, trying to look ‘serious’. “Love comes at weird times.”

“...Yeah, it does. Guess we better get going, hm?”

Senlis was the slice of France that I had been eager to see. There were plenty of huge, ornate Gothic churches from years long passed that still had enormous paintings of heavenly hosts on the inner walls. Alex knew Senlis rather well and explained who the artist was for each and where they came from. I wished I had my phone to take a picture—I wouldn’t be seeing Senlis again for a very long time.

We walked along the cobblestone streets and discussed the current affairs Kylo neatly avoided, like the shutdown of the U.S. government and the ‘polar vortex’ that had descended on the country. I jokingly told Alex I was glad to be free of the insane weather.

He brought me to a small café and my stomach growled hungrily. It was around four in the afternoon and Kylo hadn’t emerged from the shadows to drag me back to Hell. I fidgeted with my fingers when Alex opened the door for me and gestured that I enter.

We sat down at one of the small tables and I kept shifting around. The menu was in French and English and the soup of the day was sounding delicious. But my thoughts kept drifting back to Kylo; to the nauseating events of last night and I stared at the menu, too sick to consider food.

“Not hungry?”

I snapped out of my reverie and glanced up to see Alex watching me with intense interest. I hunched down lower in my chair and shook my head. “No, not really. It’s okay; you can eat.”

Alex looked around to make sure no one was nearby and leaned toward me. “Do you know why I don’t care for Kylo?”

I shrugged. “He’s not very likeable?”

“Yes, and I could sense from the day we met him that there’s something not quite right. Jaina thinks I’m paranoid but I can tell he’s... unhinged. That’s why I was very surprised he brought a woman home, especially one so young. I don’t trust him.”

“He’s okay, just kind of intense.”

“I noticed he had his hand around your neck the other night.”

“We were only—”

“Does that have anything to do with your lack of appetite?” Alex asked quietly.

I only stared back at him like a deer in headlights until the blessed waitress arrived to take our order. Alex got soup for me even though I vehemently refused. I wished I could open up and tell him everything. Maybe I could. It wasn’t like Kylo was around to stop me.

At least I knew what the creaking at the door had been. I’d been concerned it was one of the kids had seen us but a grown man witnessing it wasn’t a huge deal. The waitress set down our drinks and I turned my eyes to the table. If Alex told anyone about what Kylo did, something very bad would happen. He was a loose cannon.

“It’s a shame to see someone like you with someone like him.” Alex pushed my drink toward me, brushing his lip with his index finger. “A waste, really. I’m guessing he moved as deep into the middle of nowhere as he could to keep you from telling any of us a thing.”

I wrung my hands. “No, he likes the privacy.”

“Why don’t you tell me more, Rey?”

“You don’t know what he’s like.”

Alex sighed and pushed the drink closer. “I won’t let him hurt you.”

It wasn’t so much my own wellbeing that I was worried about. Alex would obviously call the police and Kylo was getting closer and closer to having a complete mental breakdown. Of course he’d probably kill me before I could be rescued, but if he escaped he’d go on a rampage; maybe attack Alex and Quentin. And a small part of me still thought Kylo was salvageable.

I took a sip and looked away. “He’s just a private person.”

It was starting to get dark when we went back to the house. The night was cool and still and Kylo’s car still wasn’t in the driveway. Alex stopped outside the front door and turned to face me with his hands in his pockets. I smiled and inclined my head politely.

“Thanks for taking me out,” I said.

“Anytime, Rey. Thank you for coming with me and let me know if you ever need something.”

When I turned to walk inside Alex suddenly grabbed my arm and tugged me into a soft, gentle kiss. It was completely foreign to me at that point and I instinctively clasped my hands behind my back to keep from touching him. But I leaned into him, anyway, happy to feel something other than



rough grabbing and bruising kisses.

Then I remembered myself and shoved Alex away, covering my mouth. “What the hell was that?!”

“What was what?” he asked innocently.

“Kylo is going to fucking kill me! You can’t go around kissing people you just met!”

“It was only a kiss. You want to do it again?”

I pushed Alex back again, blushing bright red, and hurried inside the house while he promised to keep in touch. Holy fuck. What the... FUCK. It was dark inside. Shaking, I twisted the lock behind me, kicked off my shoes, and turned on the living room light beside the door.

Kylo was standing by the closet door. He was dressed in a black sweater with dark jeans and had a silvery butcher knife dripping blood in one hand. His black hair was cleaned and parted and the cold, nonchalant evil in his eyes told me he was back to ‘normal.’ He’d come back from the brink and now I was at sea again, drowning in him, treading water until I finally sank beneath the waves.

He smiled. “Hello, Rey. Did you enjoy your kiss?”

“What?” I laughed nervously and shook my head. “What are you—”

A shrill scream interrupted me and I jumped in fear. Kylo gestured towards the basement door with his knife and his smile widened.

“Come,” he said, “I have something to show you.”

I pressed against the door. “You... Do you remember what you did to me last night?”

Kylo rolled his eyes and started towards me. I turned the lock behind me and opened the door without turning, stumbling back into the cold night and screaming for help.

He seized me around the waist and we wrestled for a minute. Hot fury burned through my muscles and I viciously drew my knee between his legs as hard as I could. Kylo hissed in pain, forced to drop to the ground, and I stumbled back. I snatched his bloody knife off the porch and turned back to Kylo, trembling. I had to kill him.

He laughed caustically, panting. “Do it! Don’t waste time, Rey; aim for my jugular and run for your life. After one slice you won’t be able to stop yourself.”

But I didn’t have it in me. Tears burned in my eyes and I bolted down the steps as fast as I could. I’d follow the main road and run across a major town at some point.

I looked over my shoulder and, to my dread, could see the faint outline of Kylo standing in the doorway of the house. He was too far away to be perceptible but he stepped down off the porch and began advancing toward me, legs shrouded in shadow.

I rushed through the forest keeping close to the road and realized he was gaining on me quickly. I banked to the right and found an overturned log to hide myself within, breathing a mile a minute. When I heard footsteps I clapped a hand over my mouth, eyes wide with fear. He would hear my breathing or heartbeat before anything else. One of them would be my undoing.

Kylo wasn’t winded in the least. He circled the spot a few times like he was trying to find a trace of where I had gone and seemed to walk away after a while. His footsteps tapered off and I hesitantly

resumed breathing with a small sense of victory. I'd finally outwitted him.

The wind rustled the trees as I tentatively peeked out from my hiding spot. It was incredibly dark and I had wandered farther from the road than I intended. I glanced around a few times before crawling out onto the cold earth and remained in that position to listen to his breathing or movements. He had probably walked away to look for me elsewhere.

It was quiet. I took small, deliberate steps in the direction of the main road, keeping the knife at the ready to stab if Kylo attacked me out of nowhere. No matter how lightly I stepped the earth and leaves crackled underfoot, undoubtedly attracting his attention. He was probably closing in...

An arm ensnared my waist to drag me backwards and I lost my footing immediately. I swung around blindly with the knife but Kylo caught my wrist just as the blade kissed his cheek. I pushed fiercely to cut him but he easily forced my arm down and wrenched the knife from my grasp. He shoved me forward so I collapsed on the ground and dropped on top of me moments later.

I screamed in frustration when he pinned my wrists with one hands. How did he have such ungodly strength? I could hardly twist my body either which way on the cold ground to escape.

"Get OFF me!" I shrieked.

Kylo made short work of my clothes. The knife was lying a few feet away glinting maroon in the moonlight and I desperately stared at it, finally beginning to cry. I would get over my fear and cut his throat while he was asleep.

It was unbearably cold outside and I shivered as Kylo yanked down my pants as far as he needed them. He freed him from his pants, too, and edged closer. His hand released my wrists to pull my thighs apart and I screamed at an eardrum-shattering pitch as I shoved uselessly against his shoulders.

"You're not going anywhere," he whispered into my ear.

The night was silent and still, allowing my agonized wail to echo through the dreary forest when Kylo very suddenly forced himself inside me. He groaned and kissed me hungrily, coercing my tongue to move with his as he repeatedly thrust deep inside my unwilling body. I pounded frantically on his back as the dirt and leaves crunched against my spine with each aggressive thrust Kylo made.

"Please stop," I begged, sinking my nails into his back.

"You feel divine, maman." He slid a hand under my behind to prop my hips up higher and pushed so deep inside me that I burst into fresh tears. "What do you think? Is our baby growing inside you yet?"

"You... You said you wanted me on birth control!"

Then his blue eyes were drilling through mine, hazy and unfocused with lust. He rotated his hips in a way that stroked the pleasurable spot inside me and I whimpered. "I changed my mind."

I shivered miserably as my body gradually betrayed me. The man responsible was on top of me, sweating and hot and thoroughly enjoying my misery. There was nowhere to go; nowhere to turn my head. I buried my face into Kylo's shoulder and cried quietly.

Of course, he wanted to do whatever I hated. Kylo tenderly rubbed the sensitive spot again and my breath caught in my throat. I squirmed underneath him and resisted the pulsating desire. A small,

restrained whine slipped through my lips and I gripped Kylo's straining shoulders tightly as the pleasure peaked. I broke into tears as soon as it was over.

He sealed his lips over mine and pumped a few more times until he finished, too. I'd become so sensitive that I could feel him come with a momentary swell followed by lazier thrusts that emptied him inside me. It was horrible. The leaves crunched under us and he kept groaning my name.

Kylo didn't withdraw immediately. He remained on top of me for what felt like an eternity, regaining his breath and exhaling warm air across my collar bone. I stared blankly at the canopy of trees overhead.

He stood after a while, tilting his head curiously at me shuddering miserably on the ground. I'd had an orgasm but my insides still hurt like hell and it was way too goddamn cold. The pleasure was receding and leaving behind a yawning abyss much like Kylo's own self-loathing. I was despicable.

"You touched me," he murmured.

I immediately bounced back. "Fuck you! You just raped me in the middle of some forest! And you ask me to touch you *all the time!*"

"Oh, don't be so dramatic, mon chou. You finished, didn't you?"

"So?! I can't control what my body decides to do!"

Kylo recovered the knife, still smiling at me. "I know. Isn't it wonderful?"

He picked me up off the ground and carried me back to the house, whistling amongst the dark trees. I tiredly leaned my head on his shoulder and draped my arms around his neck. He didn't even flinch.

## In what furnace was thy brain?

### Chapter Notes

i live for chapters like this

pierre POV so get ready to be sad lol sorry NOT REALLY

i torture my readers and my characters ahhhhhHAHAHAH

*The floorboards creak beneath my torn, filthy carpet. I clutch my head, biting my lip until it bleeds to keep from screaming in fear, suffocated by the darkness in my closet. Mother is drunk.*

*“Ben,” she intones, whispering, dragging on the last syllables. “Beeenjiiii...”*

*It’s the second time she comes for me. She wanders about my room, knowing full well where I’m hiding from her. She enjoys the power and control she has over me. Her freesia perfume turns my stomach and I wish I could grow wings and fly out the dirty window.*

*The TV rattles on in the living room. Han has already passed out in the master bedroom but mother is hungry for more. I’m still small, so I’ve wedged myself into a corner and I am trying to collapse in on myself like a dying star, desperate to disappear. My interest in astronomy began back then, when I would hide in the woods most of the evening until Leia fell asleep. I’d gaze at the sky and wistfully watch bats flutter past my eyes and wonder if I could touch the sky someday.*

*Mother sighs. “Come now, Ben. Maman would never hurt you.”*

“KYLO!”

The memory snapped back and I staggered on my feet, struggling to contain Rey fighting underneath me. I’d dragged her back inside the house but she was being a terror as always, kicking her skinny legs and screaming my name repeatedly. I had fresh meat in the basement and I wanted to show her how I butchered it. She would appreciate it someday.

My vision blurred as I wrestled her lean arms above her head and her screams rose to a fever pitch. Laughing, I screamed back at her until she dissolved into the pitiful sobbing mess that she was. Rey slackened underneath me and for a brief moment—

*“I ought to strangle you to death.”*

*Han is crouched on top of me. I’m fourteen and we’re halfway inside my bedroom closet where he just caught my mother with her hand between my legs. He reeks of alcohol and squeezes my throat until I gasp like a fish, still naked and squirming beneath him, pressing my toes to his muddy work boots. His hand is rough and scarred and dirt is wedged under each nail.*

*He stands up and spits on me instead. “Too bad I can’t get away with it.”*

My palm seemed to light on fire. I jerked back from Rey and she took the opportunity to crawl away towards the kitchen. Panting, eyes wide, I took a step towards her.

*Han looms over maman as she crawls away from him across their bedroom floor. I’m small, five,*

*and watch raptly through a small gap in the door as my father seizes Leia by her long brown hair. She screams and sobs and—*

Rey's shrieking again interrupted the hallucination. I shook my head and reached for her as she dragged herself to her feet with one of the island stools and she turned her bright, terrified eyes on me.

*Mother is lying on her bedroom floor in her red nightgown. Blood leaks from the corner of her mouth and her hazy blue eyes gaze impassively at the ceiling. A sitcom plays in the background, an ironic soundtrack, as I hover near the doorjamb with my thumb in my mouth. Her pale legs are riddled with purple and green bruises and her long brown hair is twisted in knots.*

*"What are you staring at?" she whispers, unmoving.*

*"What are YOU staring at?!"*

Rey glared at me, hobbling on an injured leg, and my mouth moved on its own.

"I love you, Rey." *"I love you, maman."* My chest constricted. Sick emotion. I knew it was in my best interest to kill it; kill her. Yet some small, pathetic facet of my mind clung to hope.

*Mother's head lolls to the side and her eyes are vacant and cold across the kitchen as she leans on the island. "I hate you."*

The same painful sting I felt as a five-year-old prickled across my chest and an unfamiliar sensation leeches into my eye sockets. My endless rage flared and I screamed at her in the way I'd been afraid to as a lonely, scared little boy, and my mother recoiled. Fluid poured down my cheeks as I advanced on Rey with my knife and she scrambled to escape.

*"You're supposed to LOVE ME!" I shouted.*

Maman threw a chair in my path to distract me and I intercepted her path along the other end of the table. She was wailing as she backed into a corner and raised her hands in self-defense, as if I was the aggressor and she was the victim. I bristled at the sight and her fingers undulated and swam, morphing into spindly spider legs that would creep across my body and bite me where it hurt.

She shook her head, blubbering uncontrollably. "Kylo, I'm not your mother! I'M NOT YOUR FUCKING MOTHER!"

A small gap remained and she darted through the free path along the table. I could see it: my mother's hair vanishing around a corner as she ran away from my father. Panic jolted through me and I managed to catch her before she could disappear again and leave me alone in our trailer. We collapsed by the basement door where my prey was waiting to be slaughtered.

*"He has... episodes."*

*My lawyer and psychiatrist are chatting. I am two months past the murder of my parents, quiet and patient. Dr. Skywalker isn't sure what to make of me.*

*"Psychotic?" the lawyer asks, hopeful.*

*"No..." Luke glances at me. "This is something else."*

I pushed back maman's hair from her face with trembling hands. She kept crying and pushed feebly on my chest as I tried my best to clean her up, resting on top of her between her legs. Her

cries weakened to whimpers the longer we remained on the floor together and I cooed happily to her when she finally turned her gaze towards mine. Her lower lip quivered but she smiled up at me.

“I’m sorry,” she rasped. “I do love you, Kylo.”

Rey’s face contorted for a brief moment into Leia’s and back again. The frantic hallucinations quieted but the delusion remained.

I blinked, nodding. “Good... Good. You’re—You’re supposed to love me.”

She swallowed like she was tasting her words before speaking and nodded in time with me. “I know. I know.” Her lips quivered again and her eyes glimmered with tears. “Can we go to sleep?”

There was a woman chained in the basement who I had planned on torturing and dismembering, but my mother sounded far more appealing. I stood, sheathing my knife in my belt loop, and she wrapped her arms around my neck so I could gently gather her from the floor. Rey was light as a feather and covered in mud and twigs. She had to be punished when she tried to leave me—or lied to me.

I carried her to the master bath and hummed our lullaby under my breath without noticing it. She shuddered when I began to draw a bath and flinched from my touch as I reached for her jeans. The pang of rejection burned through my pleasant reverie and I clenched my jaw.

“S-Sorry,” she stammered. “You surprised me.”

“...Oh.” The fear abated and I smiled as I unbuttoned her jeans. “I apologize, maman.”

Rey crossed her arms as I tugged down her pants. “It’s okay.”

Soon the water was an appropriate temperature and I helped her inside. My gaze traveled along the cigarette burns I’d left across her back and I beamed at the sight of them. We were the same.

She stared at the water as I followed suit and sank into the bath with her, immediately shifting forward to settle between her thighs with the back of my head on her chest. It was our typical position, to give her easier access to my—

*It’s so hot I can barely breathe. Leia is draped over me, moaning in my ear, pumping between my legs. I squirm in the water and pant desperately, fighting the tortuous pressure. I won’t do it. I can’t do it. Please, body, don’t betray me again. No more humiliating stains on my sheets. Then she’ll stop.*

Small hands settled on my shoulders and my vision blinked back to me. I took a sharp breath I wasn’t expecting, unsettled by the memory, and Rey opted to run her fingers through my hair instead. It was a much more welcome touch.

Regardless, my breathing continued hitching in my throat and I realized that I was resisting the urge to cry. Shuddering, I rolled to my side to curl between my mother’s legs and kissed along her breast to draw her nipple into my mouth like a pacifier. Her fingers tightened in my hair for a moment as I found my suckling rhythm and gently stroked with my tongue and I hesitated, blinking up at her owlishly.

Her eyes were bright with tears. We stared at one another briefly before Rey tucked a strand of my hair behind my ear and brushed her thin fingers down my cheek to rest under my jaw. I resumed nursing, something I never performed with Leia but gathered a strange sense of pleasure and tranquility from with Rey. She continued threading her fingers through my hair with her other hand

and I closed my eyes as my thoughts began to buzz pleasantly, lulling me to sleep.

“I’m sorry,” she said, voice cracking. “I’m so sorry, Kylo.”

I hummed and shrugged, rippling the water. “I know, maman.”

Soon I grew drowsy and dozed off curled up with her. I was a light sleeper, thanks to Leia, and roused to the sensation of Rey adjusting in the bathtub. The water had grown cold and I worried she would catch a chill, so I quickly left the tub and lifted her into my arms. She was shivering—fuck.

There were no towels in the house yet so I carried her to the bedroom and swaddled her in several of my shirts, panicked at the thought of her becoming ill. She slumped over as I tucked her into bed and I tried to wrap her in the sheets as tightly as possible. Rey squeezed her eyes shut and her cheeks turned sallow, tightening from a stressor I was blissfully unaware of.

I crept into bed alongside her, dampening the sheets with water. A thread wrapped around our hearts and bound us together and if either of us wandered too far from the other, it would constrict and kill us both. How distant could we be? Five miles? Five feet? Perhaps the safest thing would be slicing her open and crawling inside her warmth. I wished I could return to the quiet haven of the womb. During college I would sometimes curl underwater in a warm bath and imagine I was floating inside my mother again, listening to her sing, and my skin was unblemished and soft and... and... and...

“Kylo.”

The violent rotations in my mind grinded to a halt when I felt Rey’s cool palm against my cheek. I turned into her touch, rooting like a hungry newborn, starving for nourishment I could not digest. She watched me kiss her palm and my lips wandered to her wrists, down her forearm... I nuzzled under her chin and curled my hands to my chest and she drew her fingers through my hair with one hand while using the other to gently touch the scars on my back.

“Han,” I mumbled to no one in particular. “Sperm donor.”

Rey ran her nails along my scalp and I shivered with pleasure. I’d become so touch-starved that each insignificant little movement became a body-wide experience.

She spoke in a small voice. “What... What did they do to you?”

I struggled closer, considering fetching my knife to open her up and get inside her body. Sex was an excellent substitute that wouldn’t result in Rey bleeding to death. Hot, wet, pleasurable safety. If I couldn’t squeeze my entire body inside a woman’s womb, I’d settle for my most vulnerable part—even if they refused. I deserved to feel fucking safe after all the torment women put me through, and I’d use their miserable bodies, and they would fucking LIKE IT.

My thoughts swirled back to Rey. “Nothing, mon chou. Nothing. Go to sleep.”

She knew better than to continue questioning me. I stared at her clavicle for several minutes, gradually becoming lucid again—but permanent changes to my psyche remained.

## His house is in the village though

A cold breeze roused me in the middle of the night from a surprisingly pleasant dream. I blearily opened my eyes, stiff and bruised from my most recent encounter with Kylo, and raised my head to look around the dark bedroom. The curtains around the balcony were billowing gracefully outward, invigorated by the cold January winds howling through the woods.

I rubbed the sleepiness from my eyes and set my feet on the cold floor, rising to approach the balcony. Tears pricked in the corners of my eyes. What kind of trauma could drive a person to become so evil? There was nothing in his gaze; no spark of light. He was a statue.

I pushed the curtains aside when they flew in front of me and hobbled into the thin beam of moonlight slanting across the floor. It was bitter outside. Shivering, I folded my arms over my chest and stepped over the threshold to stand on the balcony, looking around curiously. It only took a few seconds for my eyes to adjust and torment me with a heart-wrenching sight.

Kylo was leaning against the side of the house wearing only his boxers, head lolled to the side and chest gently rising and falling in the slow rhythm of sleep. He wasn't shuddering from the low temperature, but I knew he'd still get hypothermia if he stayed out all night. There was a worn notebook in his hands and the breeze ruffled his already tousled hair.

Empathetic to a fault, I went back into the bedroom to grab a blanket or two and returned to the balcony. His eyes opened a lazy sliver when I took the notebook from his hands, but he otherwise didn't seem to care about me being there. I sat between his legs and rested on his chest, fanning the blankets around us and being sure to cover his toes. He shifted when I wrapped his arms around my waist and took his frigid fingers in mine. Christ, he felt like a snowman.

"Cold night," Kylo mumbled.

"Yeah." I cupped my hands around his and exhaled warm air on his fingers.

He laughed humorlessly. "I'm not sure if I'll ever understand you, Miss Kenobi."

"I don't even understand myself half of the time."

We lapsed into silence. I knew there was no point in talking—Kylo would never tell me anything and I would just get more and more frustrated. I idly continued warming his hands and shuddered when a frigid gale swirled around us. He perched his chin on my shoulder and held me tighter.

"If this is love, I'm relieved I've never felt it," he said.

I blushed, a bit flustered by his uncharacteristically gentle voice. "Don't be such a Debbie Downer. If I didn't care about you then you would slowly freeze to death out here."

Kylo's fingers slowly closed around my thumbs. His breath smelled vaguely of wine. "I would hardly feel it."

His words weren't slurred so he wasn't wasted but he was probably a bit tipsy. He'd been drinking a lot more alcohol recently, maybe to cope with the steadily intensifying hallucinations.

I held his hands close to my chest. "Don't people like you normally want a lot of stimulation? I would expect you to be out at bars and clubs to get that."



“I detest physical contact and I am easily overstimulated. I try to avoid others unless I will be killing or fucking them. Now I get everything I need from one *very* satisfying source. Isn’t that right, Rey?”

It felt like my stomach was going to fall out through the wound. I cleared my throat. “Err... yeah, I guess you’re right. Why’d you come out here, though? It’s freezing.”

“The sky is clear. I like to look at that the stars on nights like this.”

“You could’ve put some clothes on.”

Neither of us spoke for some time again. I kept massaging Kylo’s hands until they were back to normal and relaxed against his chest. It was warm enough with the blankets and his body heat. He wasn’t going to move any time soon. My eyes closed and I began dozing off, exhausted beyond belief.

“My parents were bad people, Rey.”

My eyes popped back open. I didn’t say anything—I didn’t know what to say—and I figured it was better to let Kylo speak on his own terms. He sank into silence but I itched to know more, like what exactly happened to give him a Oedipus complex, and how long he’d been flying into psycho episodes. I waited a few more minutes before clearing my throat.

“What did they do to you?” I asked quietly.

Kylo shrugged like it didn’t matter. “My mother molested me, which progressed to rape when I went through puberty, and my father would beat the shit out of me in retaliation.” He rested his chin on my shoulder and draped the blanket a bit to show me his pale forearms riddled with scars. “All of these are from Han, as well as the burns and scars on my back. He was a brute.”

I stared at his old wounds, breathless. “But... But why?”

“I’ve spent the greater part of my life trying to answer that question.”

Sick. How could someone do those things to their own child? I shuddered and Kylo remained draped over me, breathing so softly that I thought he fell asleep. His mother touching him... Disgusting. Vile. I almost wished she was still alive so I could kill her myself.

Kylo stirred after a while and rose to bring me back in the house. I stared at him while he changed into pajamas, blue eyes ringed with shadows, and wondered if it was okay for me to feel sorry for him. I’d witnessed firsthand what kind of monster he was, but I couldn’t help feeling a tug on my heartstrings thinking of him hiding in a closet from both parents. He didn’t have anyone.

Of course, that didn’t give him permission to rape and murder people. But what kind of help was out there for people like Kylo?

He trusted me, to a certain point. Maybe I could help him. He already pinned me as his mother and let me touch him and he could’ve killed me a long time ago. After Poe attacked me it seemed to trigger something in Kylo, like he was reminded of his mom being beat up, and he retaliated in the only way he knew. Miranda didn’t deserve to die... Maybe Poe did.

I shook my head to dispel the weird thoughts popping up and a shrill scream suddenly echoed through the house. Kylo idly looked towards the door and rolled his eyes.

“It seems my friend is tired of her captivity.” He snatched the knife off the dresser and beckoned

me. "Come, mon chou. Let's help her."

Tragic past or not, I couldn't look the other way while he murdered people.

I took a step back with a small shake of my head and Kylo advanced on me. I didn't know why I bothered resisting. He grabbed my wrist and dragged me through the bedroom and downstairs to the basement door, where the screaming reached a fever pitch.

Every time I thought Kylo might not be a monster, he proved me wrong. It was like he could sense when I was getting too comfortable and felt the need to put me back in my place under his thumb.

It was as dark and cold as the last time. Kylo threw me in the green and white lawn chair and handcuffed me to it, then sauntered off into the darkness towards the shrieking girl. There was a click and weak light spilled across a bloodstained mattress where a small brunette girl was sitting, completely naked and chained to the wall. She yanked on her restraints, struggling backwards as Kylo approached with the knife. I struggled in my own restraints and gritted my teeth.

"You can't do this!" I shouted. "You can't take it out on other people, Kylo!" The chair rocked side-to-side and scraped on the floor. "Lots of people have hard childhoods but they don't grow up and fucking kill people!"

"I kill women because I enjoy it." He circled the girl, drawing his fingers through her hair. "Don't feel the need to psychoanalyze me, Rey. Others have tried and failed."

"You're not as complicated as you think," I snapped.

Kylo grinned at me and freed the girl from the wall just to grab her hair and shove her face into the mattress. He wrapped his hand around her throat, kneeling between her legs, and raised the knife.

"No," he said, "I suppose I'm not."

The knife came down and I narrowly avoided seeing it plunge into her chest. Still, I could hear the squelching sound of it sliding through her flesh and ripping back out as he stabbed her over and over again. She took a few rattling breaths after the first few but fell silent while Kylo panted from exertion. I tried to think of something else; anything else. I thought of the sound the ocean waves made on the shoreline, and Kira laughing when we played outside in the grass. If I drifted far enough away, I could even hear my dad's voice...

"Sleepy, maman?"

Kylo was uncuffing me from the chair. He smiled when I glowered up at him and wrestled me to the floor when I tried escaping his creepy, filthy basement. I screamed and thrashed as he dragged me over to the freshly stained mattress. The dead girl was face-down beside it, her blue eyes wide and staring.

"Let GO OF ME!" I shrieked. "I should've let you freeze to death!"

He pinned me on my back and laughed. "That's not very nice. I didn't even force you to watch me kill her. You should be grateful."

"I fucking hate you! You're a *monster*!"

"Yes I am."

No—NO! I squirmed as Kylo began pulling at my clothes and pushed on his face with both hands,

determined not to let him violate my body ever again. Fuck what happened to him. He was a fucking murderer and a demon in human skin.

He buried his face in my neck and worked on yanking my pants off instead while tugging my hair with his other hand until I arched in pain. I panted in fear and glanced into the open, empty eyes of the corpse beside me and tears streamed down my cheeks. No... NO! I wasn't going to wind up like all of them and I wasn't going to give Kylo another ounce of my fucking sympathy.

Furious, I turned to look over his head and noticed the bloody knife lying on the floor. He was too busy stripping my pants off to notice as I desperately reached for the weapon, straining my fingers and holding my breath. My nails scraped the hilt and Kylo stiffened when he heard the metal scratch across the floor as I curled my fingers around it and swung it towards his ribs.

He caught my wrist just before I sank the blade through his skin. Kylo tried to twist my wrist to make me drop it but I clenched my jaw and refused to let go. We rolled off the mattress, me hissing and Kylo swearing, and he was on top of me again with the knife pointed at his chest. He glared at me and I back at him as I slowly pushed it closer to his heart, inch by inch...

"Let it go, Rey!" he snapped.

Kylo was fucking strong. I realized I wouldn't be able to stab him when we froze between each other, both trembling. Desperate and terrified and once again staring into the steel blue eyes of evil, I made a choice that was both extremely stupid and maybe even a stroke of genius.

"Fine!" I spat.

I weakened my grasp for a second so Kylo turned the knife away from his chest and wrapped my hands over his on the hilt to drive it straight down into my gut.

He blanched. I moaned in pain, arching forward to cough up a spray of blood on our hands, and sagged on the cold concrete floor. Kylo released the knife like it burned him and took my cheeks between his bloody hands, eyes wide, shaking his head. My vision swam, and I was in severe pain, but I still found the strength to smile. Good. Let me die.

"No, no, no." He smeared blood down my face and leaned back to look at the knife jutting out of my stomach. "Jesus Christ!"

"Better call an ambulance," I croaked. I laughed and hacked up more blood as Kylo rose to his feet.

I'd never seen him move so fast. He went upstairs and came back in the blink of an eye with his cell phone at his ear and ripped off my shirt to cover the knife and wound with a bunch of his dress shirts. My pulse pounded in my ears and changed to a dull roar as I laid there and smiled to myself. Even if I died, I'd know I went out scaring the shit out of Kylo—and that was enough.

He trembled as he scooped me off the floor and I lolled in his arms. I closed my eyes as the darkness crept in my periphery and my ears rang at a high pitch. Kylo's voice sounded far away.

"I love you, Rey." Tears dripped on my face as he kissed my forehead, stumbling out of the basement. His voice was low and empty, like we were underwater. "Don't leave me."

I kept smiling as I fainted. He couldn't get me if I was dead.

# He will not see me stopping here

## Chapter Notes

so i'm going to start a new very dark story like this after eunoia is over (which is soon)

i can do in-universe, but it may be difficult, or an a/u. thoughts?

*“She’s going to be fine. We sutured the wound shut and cleaned up the hemorrhage into her abdomen. We’d like to keep her for observation if she’s actively suicidal—even if it’s just for one night.”*

Ugh. My stomach hurt like hell and I could feel tubes down my nose. I frowned and shifted in bed, listening to the soft, steady beep of monitors. The person speaking wasn’t familiar, but I assumed it was a doctor. I moaned and my eyes rolled open, blinking blindly under the fluorescent lights. Where was I? Why did my body hurt so much?

It smelled like hospital. I whimpered and became aware of a warm body curled against mine that stirred when I did. There was all sorts of stuff plugged into my body, like stickers on my chest and a clip on my finger and an IV in my elbow, and it felt like I shouldn’t move. But pain lanced through my stomach and I shifted uncomfortably, whimpering again and stretching my hand out blindly to the person next to me.

Lips pressed to my neck. “More morphine, mon chou?”

The pain was getting worse really fast. I nodded, afraid I’d scream if I opened my mouth, and watched Kylo lean across me to press a button on the IV. His black hair was messy and he looked exhausted as he settled back beside me while the morphine coursed through my veins and quickly began easing the pain. My eyelids fluttered but I fought the urge to fall asleep, terrified that Kylo would do something to me if I dozed off next to him.

But morphine was a damn powerful drug and I fell asleep with my cheek resting on top of his head.

“Rey?” A hand shook my arm gently. “Rey?”

My eyes popped open, but I could barely keep them that way. There was a man standing in front of me in a white lab coat and Kylo wasn’t lying next to me in bed anymore. I groggily smiled at the doctor and he smiled back and tugged down the sheet to—

My breath caught. There was a vertical set of black stitches right up the center of my stomach, packed with something and weeping some orange stuff. The doctor didn’t seem bothered by it but he noticed my look of panic and hastily began explaining what was happening in French.

“She speaks English,” Kylo called offhandedly.

The doctor switched without missing a beat. “This is very normal, Miss Kenobi. The orange residue is iodine and the packing is to help the wound heal. You were very lucky—you narrowly missed your abdominal aorta and sliced through a bit of your intestines as well as your liver, but we were able to fix it. You’ll need a few weeks of bedrest before you can move again.”

That explained the mind-numbing pain. I just nodded, gritting my teeth, and hit the button for morphine again. The doctor stepped back and I could see Kylo sitting next to the bed with his legs crossed, listening intently to post-op instructions that I couldn't give a flying fuck about. I tried to sit up in bed, relieved that the tubes were gone from my nose, and flinched. Who knew stabbing yourself in the gut would be so painful?

"We'll send a visiting nurse to clean the wound about once a week," the doctor said, "but otherwise it's important to keep it dry and watch for signs of infection. As I said last night, we'll keep her here for a week for observation." He glanced at me and back to Kylo. "The nurses noticed some... ah... scars on her back, so we'll also have to call a social worker in tomorrow. Protocol."

I couldn't help it—I was high on the morphine and feeling brave and I started cackling to myself. The doctor turned to give me a weird look but Kylo just stared at me, showing no emotion while I laughed until tears ran down my cheeks. He was in deep shit now.

He nodded. "Of course. I'm still not entirely sure what drove her to stab herself, but I suppose mental health is a complicated issue."

"It's complicated, all right," I slurred. My thoughts were spinning out of control and I laughed again. "You guys ever seen *Braveheart*? What's with Mel Gibson, huh?"

"This is a pretty typical reaction to morphine. She may continue to spout off nonsense. Very powerful drug." The doctor shook Kylo's hand and waved to me. "Try to rest, Rey."

Then he left and I was alone in the room with Kylo once again. I stared at him for a long minute before breaking down into small giggles, struggling to keep my face straight and failing miserably.

He raised his eyebrows, leaning his elbow on the armrest, fingers in an 'L' shape to support his temple. "You find this amusing, hm?"

"You look so pissed." I covered my mouth and spluttered with more laughter. "You're in huge trouble, aren't you?"

"Not as much as you think. The healthcare system is much different in Europe than the United States. Things like advance directives aren't followed as closely—not that you even *have* advance directives. You're a foreigner, with no family, actively suicidal... A bit of a messy patient. But feel free to tell them whatever you please."

As always, Kylo was bullshitting me. I rolled my eyes and leaned back in bed to watch TV, even though I couldn't understand a thing they were saying. He kept staring at me until the nurse brought in my lunch and adjusted the dosage of the morphine. It was all liquid food, probably because I pierced my intestines, but I didn't have much of an appetite, anyway. I casually ate my Jell-O while Kylo continued to watch me and tried to pretend I couldn't see him.

"You were in surgery for six hours."

I scooped up more Jell-O. "Neat."

He tapped his fingers on the armrest. "I thought you were dead."

"Too bad I wasn't." I moved on to my applesauce and shrugged, still ignoring his stare. "Doesn't matter, anyway. Once I tell the social worker about you burning my back with cigarettes and raping me, you'll be locked up for life." I frowned. "Does France have the death penalty? Maybe they'll bring it back for you. Florida's super loosey-goosey with it, y'know."

“I love you, Rey.”

I stiffened and finally gave him what he wanted, turning a cold glare on him. Kylo smiled and cocked his head, clearly pleased with himself for getting a reaction. I threw down my applesauce and crossed my arms.

“You think so?” I snapped. “Really? What’s the point of telling me that, Kylo? You think I’m going to go back to your house of horrors and keep playing out your Norman Bates bullshit because you said you *love me*? Which you don’t, by the way.”

“I do love you.” His smile turned smug and he shrugged. “In my own way.”

“In your own—” I spluttered, pushing my tray away. “You—You’re a...

A knock on the door interrupted us. “Hello there.”

We looked up to see a short balding man in a gray suit. He smiled and bustled inside, adjusting his glasses, and sat in the other chair near Kylo. He had a file with him and introduced himself as Clark, the social worker who would be interviewing us. I straightened up and fought the influence of the morphine. This was it. Time to fuck Kylo up and get the hell away from him.

Kylo eyed Clark. “We were told you’d be coming tomorrow.”

“The hospital has me so busy that sometimes appointments change. Don’t worry, this won’t take long.” He took out some papers and peered at me over his glasses. “You are Miss Kenobi, correct?”

“Yes, I am and I have—”

“A nurse noticed scarring on your back that’s typical of cigarette burns. Now these situations become a bit of ‘he said, she said,’ so we typically send a social worker to the home once a week to check in for a few months. However, due to your foreign status, this becomes a bit complicated. How did you get these burns?”

I cast Kylo a wide smile. “Him.”

Clark didn’t seem to care much. He scribbled it down while Kylo and I glowered at each other.

“Rey is mentally unstable,” Kylo said, tearing his eyes from mine. “She tried to commit suicide.”

I bristled. “No, I didn’t! You were trying to rape me!”

“Yes, so—” Clark closed the folder and leaned back, shrugging. “This is where things become complicated. Due to your instability, Rey, we can’t release you without someone accepting custody for the time being. Is there anyone else you can stay with? Obviously we don’t have to release you to Kylo, especially with your allegations—and we’ll need to get a rape kit.”

“Jaina Bauer,” I said. “She lives in Senlis. She’s Kylo’s cousin.”

“Oh, excellent. We’ll go give her a call.” Clark rose to his feet and beckoned Kylo. “Mr. Ren, it’s probably best if you come with me for a bit.”

Kylo followed after him after shooting me one more acidic glare. I stuck my tongue out and settled back in bed, pleased with how things were going. I’d stay with Jaina and Tobias for a while before calling mom and asking her to come save me from this hellish country. My stomach had to heal,

anyway, so flying wasn't a good idea. I'd be safe with the Bauers, though.

My room was quiet for a long time. I took another dose of morphine and drummed my fingers on the table, getting a weird sense of dread. Kylo was way too calm. What was he up to?

A few hours went by before two squealing kids ran into my room. Manon and Camille both tried to crawl into bed with me but Jaina swept in to pull them back, chastising them gently and explaining that I was very sick. Tobias waved and took over corralling them while Jaina leaned over my bed to hug me.

"Kylo called us!" She was panicked, checking my face. "Alex is on his way as well. Are you okay, Rey? What happened?"

Kylo drifted into the room with his hands in his pockets. He was smiling.

I held her wrists and glanced at him, then back to her eyes. "I... um..."

Manon and Camille gravitated to Kylo like always and he kept smiling as he touched the top of their heads, drawing them to him. He couldn't hurt them. I mean, if I told them everything, he'd probably be arrested on the spot and go straight to jail. It wasn't like he could get out. The ball was already rolling with the social worker so it was just a matter of time now.

Jaina sat on the edge of the bed, sighing. "We were lucky we got the call. We're on our way to Spain for vacation—but we can certainly stay here until you're feeling better."

I slowly turned my gaze towards Kylo and he winked. Son of a *bitch*.

"That's okay," I said, staring at him. "I'll be fine."

"Alex will be around." Tobias was standing at the foot of the bed and shrugged. "I'm sure he can help Kylo with Rey, my love."

Alex—he already suspected Kylo. He was perfect.

I nodded in agreement. "Yeah, if it's not too much to ask."

I wasn't sure what exactly Kylo told them over the phone, but from the way Jaina got teary-eyed and kept adjusting my gown, I assumed it was the suicide lie. She didn't seem to want to broach the subject with me and I figured it was best to keep her innocent family out of it. Alex would get it.

They stayed for a bit longer and left when Alex knocked on the door. I winced but didn't take anymore morphine. I needed to be at least semi-lucid when I talked to him.

He wasn't smiling. He ignored me to grab Kylo by the front of his shirt, which just made him laugh. Alex twisted the shirt until his knuckles turned white before he let go and sat in the vacant seat next to my bed. Kylo smiled and leaned on the wall with his arms folded.

"You didn't try to kill yourself, did you?" Alex asked. Right out of the gate; Jesus.

"Of course not." I pointed at Kylo, scowling. "*He* was attacking me."

Alex didn't look at him. "I figured. Quentin and I live in Paris and you're more than welcome to stay with us until you get better. Will you go back to the States?"

Uh... Well, maybe. But Kylo could follow us there. I shrugged.

“I’m not sure,” I said. “I guess I have to, since I’m not an immigrant.”

“You can get married.” Alex cleared his throat, shrugging. “Need be.”

“Um... I don’t want you to—”

Kylo laughed and waved a dismissive hand. “Alexandre, don’t concern yourself. Rey will be returning home with me when the doctors realize the depth of her insanity. No need to plan so far ahead, though we appreciate your concern.”

He was always a few steps ahead of everyone else, but it wouldn’t help him this time. I smiled coldly and nodded to Alex.

“I’d be happy to stay,” I said. “Just make sure it’s okay with Quentin.”



# To watch his woods fill up with snow

## Chapter Notes

wHaT the FrIcK

two or three more chapters to this i think

“We have no reason to suspect abuse. The girl is clearly mentally unstable—maybe bring her home and consider psychiatric intervention. She’s from the States, correct?”

“Yes. She’s here for travel, but we intend on marrying.”

“Ah, congratulations.” Paper crinkled. “The rape kit came back negative, and there’s no way to tell if she’s being truthful about the scars. We didn’t find you in the police database, either. You have dual citizenship, correct, Mr. Ren?”

“Oui.”

Someone sighed. “We’ll discharge her soon, then. The nurse will visit twice weekly and a social worker will visit once a week for the next month. I’m terribly sorry to cause such an inconvenience.”

“It’s no matter. I have nothing to hide.”

When I finally managed to open my eyes, I knew something was wrong. It was like I’d shot up the entire bag of morphine and everything came to me through a sieve. Lights popped across the room and I struggled to keep both of my eyes open at the same time while Kylo talked to a doctor beside my bed. My limbs were like jelly and I couldn’t even raise an arm to reach out for him.

Kylo turned, now changed into a sweater and jeans, and thanked the doctor before leaning over my bed with his arms crossed. His blue eyes wavered and twisted and he looked like a demon.

“Good morning, my love,” he cooed. “So sleepy today.” He rested his chin on his palm and a cruel smile touched his lips. “I wonder if it’s the Rohypnol I gave you.”

I blinked slowly, too drugged to understand his words. Kylo kissed my forehead, then gripped the railing and leaned over to kiss me hard on the mouth. I sloppily tried to kiss him back and he yanked my hair, making me whimper pitifully. When he drew back he squeezed my cheeks in one hand and growled something under his breath before pushing my head away.

Now I could see black restraints around my wrists and ankles that were keeping me from moving. I squirmed in terror and Kylo casually leaned on the railing to dip his hand under my gown and stroke my thigh with his long fingers. He drew his fingers up, slow and torturous, still smiling at me.

“Did you really think you would get away from me?” he asked, almost with pity. Two fingers slipped through the side of my panties and inside me with no warning. “You’re mine, Rey.”

I tried to pull on the restraints but I was too weak to move much. He kept staring at me, gently moving his fingers for a few minutes while I rolled my wrists in the straps and cried softly. Kylo

cocked his head and withdrew to suck each finger that had been inside me, then leaned over my bed again, one hand on each railing. He pressed his forehead to mine and drew a line of kisses down my cheek, licking up my tears along the way, until his breath was on my ear.

“You’re going to behave for the social worker,” he whispered, “and when the four weeks is up, I’m going to break your legs. Not the hands—I like watching your frantic little hands clawing at the mattress as you try to get away from me.”

The nurse came in the room to remove all the tubes and wires at that moment. She pouted when she saw me and smiled at Kylo and I only caught the word ‘emotional’ while everything was taken off and out of me. They released my restraints but I was too drugged up to get out of bed so Kylo leaned over and lifted me out like a doll. He set me on my feet as the nurse left once again and I sagged against his chest so he could take off the hospital gown and put me in real clothes. The room swam.

We left the hospital half an hour later. Alex was nowhere to be seen.

The drive back to the house was quiet, though. I slumped against the door and blinked slowly at the trees rushing past us, wondering what exactly would happen now. There wasn’t really anyone else to help me. Maybe I could say something to the social worker in private. It wasn’t like Kylo could kill every single person who tried to help me.

It was midafternoon when we got home. Kylo got out first and walked to the other side to lift me out bridal-style and carried me up the steps. I squirmed a little, wincing as pain lanced through my stomach.

“You’ll be sound asleep after I’m through with you,” Kylo cooed as he unlocked the door.

I was already halfway there but the pain was making it hard to doze off. He brought me upstairs and straight to the bedroom, where he dumped me on the bed like a ragdoll. I moaned and curled into a ball on instinct but my stomach protested with sharper jabs and I cried as I stretched out and rolled on my back. I knew what he was going to do to me and I figured I’d puke from the pain.

Kylo didn’t move, though. He stood next to the bed with his hands in his pockets, watching me writhe with a blank expression on his face. His jaw clenched after a bit and he suddenly looked angry.

“You should be punished!” he snapped. His mouth kept shifting as he wrestled with an emotion I couldn’t place, then he stalked off to the dresser, stiff with irritation. “Take your clothes off, Rey.”

Trembling, I fingered the hem of my yoga pants and tried to push them off. They were biting into my wound and I worried it would bust open. Kylo glanced over his shoulder at me and rolled his eyes, then slammed the drawer shut and came back to me with sweatpants and a blue dress shirt.

He yanked my pants off in one swift motion and pulled my shirt over my head. I didn’t have a bra on, thank god. That would’ve been even more torture. Kylo actually flinched when he looked at the scar on my stomach and he maneuvered my arms in the shirt one by one. It was much more comfortable. He buttoned it twice in the middle and carefully slipped the sweatpants on. They were huge, obviously, and gave the wound plenty of space.

I stared up at Kylo, lower lip quivering, half expecting him to start choking me or something. But he stood between my knees with the same odd emotion in his eerie blue eyes and brushed my hair back from my face, cupping my cheek. My heart skipped a beat.

“Are you in pain?” he asked quietly.

Fuck. I didn’t know if I should admit that my stomach was on fire or pretend it wasn’t. I shrugged weakly, non-committal, and he brushed his thumb across my lips.

“The doctor gave you some Percocet, but we have to wait for the morphine to wear off.” He peeled back the sheets and helped angle me under them, adjusting the pillows behind my head. “I’ll get you some water and something to eat. You have to have sponge baths for the next week.”

Alarms went off in my head at his sudden change in behavior. Usually it meant he was about to do something particularly awful or start confusing me with his mother. But he leaned over to kiss my forehead, adjusted the comforter around my shoulders, and left the room.

I laid there in silence, still reeling from the drugs. My pulse throbbed in my ears as I waited with bated breath for Kylo to come back into the room with his oversized knife or to hear a woman screaming from the basement. But it was still. The grandfather clock in the hallway ticked on and I shivered from pain and a slight chill. Pots and pans clanked downstairs.

There was no way I could get out of bed; I couldn’t even speak yet. I swallowed hard and resisted my heavy eyelids, but the bed was comfortable, and I was exhausted...

“Rey.”

The world spun back and I scrambled away from the sound of Kylo’s voice. He pinned my shoulders while I panted and tried to get my bearings before I realized I was lying in his bed. I took a few shaky breaths and his grip became gentler as he murmured and kissed my forehead again. My stomach buzzed with pain again and I burst into tears, overwhelmed by everything happening to me.

Kylo clicked his tongue like he was reprimanding me and slipped into bed. I almost started screaming at the thought of being attacked but he curved an arm under my head and nuzzled under my chin and didn’t make a move to tear off any of my clothes. Somehow it was even worse.

“Please stop,” I sobbed, “please get away from me!”

“I brought you some food, mon chou, so you can take the Percocet.” He sat up a little, turning to grab a plate with a grilled cheese, and smiled in a genuine, human way that turned my stomach. “See?”

I stared at him, petrified. What was his angle? What kind of fucking game was he playing now?

“What do you want from me? What—What do you want me to do?” Tears kept streaming down my face and I shook my head, hiccupping. “Do you want me to pretend to be your mother?” I tore through my shirt’s buttons, exposing my breasts. “Please tell me what you want me to do!”

Kylo’s smile faded and he gazed back at me, impassive. He rose from the bed and set the plate beside me, along with an oblong white pill. There was a glass of water on the nightstand.

He took a step back. “Eat before you take the pill, or you might vomit.”

Then he left me alone in the bedroom, closing the door softly behind him.

I didn’t move until my stomach growled at the smell of the grilled cheese. My mouth was dry, too, and the Percocet would help with the pain. I glanced at the plate and figured there was no point in ignoring food. If I didn’t get something solid in my stomach I really would puke.

It went down fast. I ate the grilled cheese like an animal—he'd used Swiss, my favorite, and put in tomatoes and ham, too. It was the best thing I ever tasted and I washed it down with water and the Percocet tablet. I leaned in the pillows without budging for another few minutes, waiting for the drugs he laced the water with to kick in, but I only felt the soothing buzz of the Percocet. The pain in my gut faded and I set the plate on the nightstand.

It would come any minute now. Kylo would come back in the room drunk or high and scream at me and throw me in the closet and rape me. I twiddled my thumbs, again resisting the urge to pass out, and stiffened when the bedroom door quietly opened.

Kylo peered inside and smiled in the same disturbingly normal way when he saw the empty plate. He went to the bathroom to refill the cup of water and I snatched it from him, gulping it down in the blink of an eye. His fingers drifted across my hairline, brushing the flyaways from my face.

“Good, good,” he chirped. “How about a bath before bed, hm?”

I slowly lowered the cup from my mouth, staring at him while he ran his fingers through my hair. He took the cup and set it aside and raised his eyebrows when he saw me still staring.

“Why are you doing this?” I asked. “What are you going to do to me?”

He returned my gaze and shrugged. “Because I love you, I suppose. Up, up, Rey.”

Unwelcome pleasure at hearing him say that surged through me. Kylo scooped me out of bed under my armpits and helped me hobble to the bathroom. He set me down on the toilet and I arched back to keep the pressure off my stomach.

He was strangely quiet as he helped me out of his clothes and folded them on the bathroom sink. He put a clear bandage over the wound, probably to protect it from water, and led me under the stream. I swayed on my feet while Kylo washed my body and hair; never lingering or trying to take things any further. My body prickled anxiously with his warm naked body behind mine, but it ended without incident. He dried me off and dressed me again and threw away the bandage.

I brushed my teeth and drank another glass of water. Kylo touched the small of my back to lead me into the bedroom and helped me under the sheets. My hair was still damp, but I was too exhausted to keep standing. He kissed my temple and gathered the plate and glass to bring them downstairs. When he was at the bedroom door, I sat up.

“Wait!” I bleated.

Kylo paused and turned slightly to face me. I stared at him, mind aflutter, struggling to rationalize and compartmentalize him into something I could understand.

I wrung my hands beneath the sheets. “Why do you think you love me?”

His eyebrows raised, like he hadn't thought of it, and he shrugged. “I've watched plenty of women bleed to death, Rey. You should be no different.” He tilted his head and smiled. “But here we are.”

Then he left me alone again and I sank into the pillows. Yeah... here we are.

## **The woods are lovely, dark and deep,**

Days passed. I waited with bated breath for Kylo to attack me again, but he kept his distance, only visiting to feed and water me and make sure I took my Percocet. He helped me into the shower a few times and waited politely outside while I washed my hair and scrubbed off the sweat from lying around all day. My wound hurt slightly less than it had at the beginning of the week.

The nurse came to change the packing and pointedly checked my body over for any new bruises or marks. She actually kissed my forehead when she left and patted my cheek, smiling sadly, and ignored Kylo when she left the house. I sat in bed and leaned into the pillows to watch TV for the fifth day in a row. I could kind of walk on my own, but it was easier to ask for help. There wasn't much else to do in Kylo's house of horrors, anyway.

He hung by the bedroom door with his hands in his pockets and smiled. "No signs of infection."

"Yeah, that's good." I slid down in the sheets and pulled them up to my chin. "The social worker is coming in two days. Are you holding out on raping me?"

"You're weak. I don't want to tear your stomach open."

Hmph, that was out of character. I trained my eyes on the TV, watching a National Geographic episode about aliens that I couldn't understand because it was in French. Kylo watched me quietly for a while, smiling, and sauntered into the bedroom after ten minutes had gone by. I pointedly ignored him as he crept under the covers beside me, half expecting him to crawl on top of me and violate my peace.

Kylo was fully clothed and appeared fully aware. He nuzzled under my arm and sighed sleepily, settling against my chest, and I waited for him to start his creepy nursing thing. But he didn't. He laid there with me, one long arm slung across my chest, and watched TV.

I thought of him throwing me in the closet, blue eyes wild and wide, and hastily yanking down my shirt to get my nipple in his mouth. I'd never fought back like I had a few days ago. It was horrifying—him calling me his mother and talking about having a baby. The hospital ran a pregnancy test of course and it was negative, but I knew sooner or later...

"I called my friend Erik for you."

Oddly, I'd been drifting off. I yawned and brushed Kylo's hair absentmindedly, then drew my hand back like I'd been bitten. He turned to look up at me and smiled, nodding, so I touched him again with a trembling hand. He closed his eyes and his smile turned faint and happy.

I swallowed hard. "Uh... who's Erik?"

"A psychiatrist. I met him when he was in undergrad." Kylo arched into my touch, humming. "He's agreed to come speak to you—perhaps let some pressure off your shoulders."

Holy shit. Kylo was calling in a shrink for me? I stared down at him and kept running my fingers through his black hair. Was he delusional again?

"O... kay," I managed. "Is he like you?"

"He wants to be." Kylo opened one blue eye, smirking. "But he has his uses."

We laid there for most of the night in utter silence. Kylo dozed off for a while but woke at one point and stripped out of his clothes down to his briefs. He crept under my arm again in the dark room, now only illuminated by the flickering television. I was less suspicious than before and idly touched his hair with the arm bent under his neck. He murmured and I felt his warm breath across my breast.

The past few days had been quiet and still. Kylo didn't even try to lay in bed with me until tonight. I swallowed nervously and touched his cheek, drawing his lips to my palm. He kissed me slowly and sighed into my skin. I touched his chin, breathless, and had a weird urge...

I shifted the edge of my shirt—well, Kylo's shirt—to expose my breast, and gently curled my fingers around his jaw. He grasped my thigh and brushed my nipple with his nose first, unsure, then kissed it hesitantly. My heart pounded as I drew my fingers under his jaw and he drew the tip of his tongue across my nipple, then groaned and latched on.

It was wrong. It was really, *really* wrong. But I whimpered and pressed my fingers into Kylo's jaw while he suckled in long, slow pulls, shifting closer beside me. He slipped a hand down my panties and stroked me in a gentle way I wasn't used to, and I brushed his hair back and massaged the breast in his mouth with my other hand. My mind spun as I stroked under Kylo's chin and he looked at me through his hazy, happy blue eyes. I smiled back and brushed his cheek with my thumb.

His fingers kept moving in a slow, soft rhythm, and I moaned and rolled my hips. I knew I needed to stop him, but it felt nice and he was being really gentle. Kylo kept going and the mixture of sensation brought me to the edge faster than I thought. I panted and arched, even though it hurt my stomach, and he groaned with me when I finished with a low gasp.

He kissed along my chest to my other nipple. "I want you, Rey."

"Okay. Just be careful."

Kylo crept on top of me without another word. He tugged down my pants and kept suckling from my nipple while I squirmed underneath him. When he tried to rock forward, pressing between my legs, I whimpered and flinched in pain. He frowned and peered at the cut on my stomach.

"Sorry," I mumbled, "it's sensitive."

"Fuck." Kylo kissed my neck and wandered down to my breasts. "That's fine. I just want to nurse tonight. Maybe I can find a medication that makes you lactate."

I nodded and he rose from the bed to check in the bathroom. My body felt prickly from excitement and I brushed my hair back, smiling despite myself, then raised my head when he came back. He offered me a pill on his fingertip and I took it without thinking as he crept into bed beside me again. It sank into my belly and Kylo curled against my ribs and rooted for my nipple again. He groaned and kept going, making pleased whimpers, until I felt a weird sensation in my breast.

It was like fluid squirting out and I reddened. Kylo sighed and kept pulling until more dribbled into his mouth and he thrust against my leg, groaning and suckling. He held me close and rubbed on my thigh while I absently touched his hair. I touched my breast to squeeze more milk past his lips and he did the same, fingers wrapping around mine to fill his mouth with more. He kept his eyes closed and moaned.

"I love you," he cooed. "You taste so sweet."

Kylo kept whimpering and rubbing on my leg, so I did what any normal person would do and leaned my weight on his to roll on top of him.

Silence stretched across the room. He went slack beneath my hips, staring, and his blue eyes trembled as I frowned down at him. White milk dribbled down his lips as I cupped his jaw in my hands. For the first time, Kylo was scared, and he was scared of *me*.

I laughed. "Are you serious?"

Kylo didn't respond. He clung to the sheets and gazed off into space. I felt awful for dredging up his memories and leaned over to kiss him gently on the lips, shifting my hips closer to his. He panted anxiously and swallowed hard when I kissed the edge of his mouth. He was scared of a woman on top of him and I knew exactly why. It was how Leia took what she wanted.

I leaned over him, tugging my shirt so my breasts were out. "Shh. It's okay. I won't hurt you. Drink."

He gazed up at me, blue eyes glassy, and drew me into his mouth with his tongue. I trembled as I lifted my hips to bring him inside me, and Kylo whimpered into my nipple. He clung to my breast with both hands and let me bob on top of him, easing the pressure from my wound. I couldn't help but giggle when milk flowed out of me and he panted and lapped it up eagerly.

Kylo stared into my eyes as I slowly rocked my hips on top of him. He squeezed my breast and suckled and watched me moan and rock on his cock. I kissed his hair and rolled my hips into his, now sitting in his lap while he nursed and quietly fucked me. He switched to my other breast and stretched up to wrap his arms around me, grunting and leaving my breasts to kiss along the side of my face. I clung to his shoulder blades and whimpered in response.

"You taste good, maman," Kylo cooed. "I want to cum in you."

I nodded, panting. "O—Okay."

"Rey." He gazed into my eyes and laughed, breathless. "I know it's you. I love you." He dipped to my breast and pulled milk, groaning. "Does it hurt?"

"No, no!" I shook my head, spastic, clinging to him. "I'm okay."

"Ah. Good."

We both panted in the darkness and Kylo tried to angle to hips so it didn't hurt. I stroked the back of his head and kissed his hair while slowly rocking in his lap and he groaned low in his throat. He helped me move up and down and kissed along the edge of my neck when I began squirming. His lips returned to my breast and he took long pulls and I choked and tangled my fingers in his hair and climaxed right then and there with tiny squeaks. He grunted and held me firm in his lap.

Kylo's blue eyes rolled back and he leaned into the pillow to switch to my other breast, casually rocking inside me. He clung to me and sucked until milk or fluid or whatever was pulled into his mouth and his hands rolled me in smooth motions on his lap. Obviously he wasn't use to a woman on top of him, but if we changed positions, it would be difficult for both of us.

He sighed impatiently and did just that. I shifted anxiously in the pillows as Kylo rolled on top of me and kissed my forehead as he sank inside me again. He clung to the headboard and did his best to avoid any forceful movement while I whimpered and clung to his hips. My stomach rolled somewhat with each thrust and he panted in my hair and whispered to me when little sounds slipped from my lips. He kissed my temple hard and laughed and rolled underneath me again with

his hands on my hips.

“Fuck.” Kylo adjusted me in his lap and pressed his thumbs into my hipbones. “Fuck, maman. I want to fuck you so badly.” He hooked his chin over my shoulder and grunted. “Christ, you’re tight, Rey. I’m going to cum in you.”

“Okay,” I panted, mildly embarrassed.

Kylo leaned back to bring my nipple in his mouth again and I touched his hair and kissed the top of his head. He squeezed and lapped up milk and took a few sharp breaths as he swelled inside me and climaxed without much fanfare. He pumped a few times and his legs shifted as he groaned and jerked and took a few short sucks from my nipple. I felt him stir inside me.

He panted when he was done and nuzzled under my chin. “Fuck... Fuck. Jesus fucking Christ.”

“Yeah,” I said, nodding and trying to catch my breath.

We turned to lie beside one another, and Kylo withdrew. I didn’t want to get up and wash him out of me and he kissed my neck hungrily and nosed into my hair. My arms trembled as I grasped his jaw and redirected his mouth lower and I couldn’t help but smile when his lips latched on to my nipple. He massaged my breast and squirmed closer and I idly stroked his hair. Hey, if it made him happy...

“Thank you, maman,” Kylo cooed. He lapped at my nipple and smiled. “I love you.”

I stared back at him and smiled, too. “I know.”

What was the harm, anyway? He went back to idly suckling and I rested my chin on his head, stroking his hair and humming something under my breath. Kylo sighed happily and used his hand to gently squeeze my breast and admittedly, it felt kind of nice.

I sighed. “I’m sleepy.”

“Mhm. Go to sleep, Rey. You’ve had a long day.”

Couldn’t argue with that. My fingers draped loosely by Kylo’s head and I drifted off with his lips bobbing on my breast.



# **But I have promises to keep**

## Chapter Notes

### REY U DOLT

The strange sense of calm persisted, but my suspicion faded away somewhat when Kylo continued keeping his distance from me. I'd sit and eat my three meals a day in relative quiet and read books or watch TV and he would hang out in another part of the house. We didn't really talk about our weird consensual encounter—I figured neither of us knew what to say.

The social worker showed up on Friday morning to check my back and ask me more about Kylo. It was my chance to get away from him, but I sat at the kitchen table and avoided most of her questions, glancing at him watching us from the living room. She said something to him in French when she left and he softly shut the door behind her, then turned and looked at me. Neither of us moved.

He shrugged away from it and sauntered over to me with his arms folded over his chest. I kept staring up at him, waiting for something bad to happen. The house was quiet and still.

Kylo smiled and tilted my chin gently with two fingertips, then leaned over to kiss me gently on the lips. It steadily deepened and my heart pounded as he stepped closer and cupped my cheek in his palm. I arched toward him and suddenly threw my arms around his neck, hoping I'd be rewarded for keeping my mouth shut, and he lifted me out of the chair with one arm. It clattered on the floor when he swung me around through the air and stumbled towards the living room.

We still didn't say anything. Kylo carried me to the couch and that was about as far as we got. I worked through his belt and he hastily tugged open another one of his dress shirts I'd put on to keep my wound from being pushed on. He grabbed my hips and tugged me closer, obviously going straight to my breasts, and I panted and ran my fingers through his hair. He yanked down my pants and helped me out of them and we collapsed on the couch.

I straddled his thighs as he kissed a trail up my throat and he rolled my hips in his lap, groaning under his breath. His thumb drifted to the apex of my thighs and I whimpered, tangling my fingers in his hair as his hungry mouth roamed back to my breasts. Kylo sucked on my nipples for a while and quietly angled my hips to push inside me when both of us were slick with my essence. He panted in my ear and I leaned on his chest, squirming as he slowly rocked deeper, guiding me in his lap.

"Fuck," he breathed. He shifted his hips and thrust up into me. "Jesus Christ, Rey."

We clung to each other and almost finished in conjunction. I moved to get up after, assuming Kylo didn't want me on top of him anymore, but he wrapped his arms around me and buried his face in my neck. Neither of us spoke. He kissed my neck and gently rolled his hips, breathing softly on my skin, and I nuzzled into his neck as he stiffened inside me. I could feel the scars on his back under my fingertips.

It was still quiet when we went upstairs. Kylo led me to the master bathroom and we took off the rest of our clothes after he started the shower. He put on one of the wound shields and helped me

step into the tub under the warm spray of water.

Both of us washed off, still not speaking, but I guessed we didn't really need to. He kissed me again when we were done and I settled my hands on his hips as he deepened the kiss and stepped closer. My pulse quickened and I decided to take another risk like I had two nights ago.

I carefully wrapped my fingers around Kylo's cock, now half-hard and inches from my stomach wound. His breath caught and he broke our kiss and panted nervously when I tightened my grip. I didn't say anything—I knew it would remind him of his mother whispering to him—but stood there quietly and moved my hand in long, slow strokes, leaning on his chest. He groaned and wrapped his arms around me, soon thrusting into my palm with his breath on the side of my neck.

I swallowed hard. "Is this okay?"

"Yes..." Kylo nodded and kissed my shoulder. "Feels... so good..." He took a couple of sharp breaths and left more kisses on my shoulder. "I want to cum on your tits."

Always with the freaking *breasts*. I rolled my eyes, hidden by his chest, and he reached back to hastily turn off the water. He didn't bother drying either of us off and pushed me to my knees next to the bed. His blue eyes were hazy but still tense as I curled my fingers around his cock again and went back to the same pumping motion from before. Kylo clenched his jaw and rubbed his face in his hands, whimpering, then ran his fingers through his hair and kept his eyes squeezed shut.

"Rey," he bleated in the most pitiful voice I'd ever heard, "please."

He covered his face again and I saw his arms trembling. In a few more seconds I felt him twitch in my palm and he grunted, low and guttural, and squirted thick ropes of cum on my chest and neck. I turned my head a bit as the last of it dribbled down my fingers and Kylo moaned softly and flexed his hips.

Both of us panted and he knelt in front of me, blue eyes wide and glassy. Panic rippled through me—it was how he always looked before he flew off the handle. Kylo took my hand covered in his cum and mechanically sucked it off each finger, licking them clean and staring off into space. I stopped him when he got to my ring finger and shook my head, cupping his face in my clean hand.

"What are you doing?" I whispered.

"Can't waste it," he muttered, rooting blindly for my hand.

I was afraid to stop him for obvious reasons but it was gross and depressing. His vacant gaze followed my fingers as I stuck them in my own mouth and fought the urge to gag. Cum tasted like shit. Kylo stared blankly and his eyes flickered down to my chest, also covered in the sticky opaque fluid, and I wasn't about to lick all of that off, too. But he settled for smearing it around with his fingers, running it over my nipples with his thumbs and kissing my neck.

We went to the bathroom after he was satisfied and I forcibly washed it off his hands when he refused. The six-foot-three murdering, rapist psychopath cried behind me while I scrubbed his own jizz from his fingers to keep him from eating it. Then he perched his chin on my shoulder and watched with wide eyes while I cleaned my chest off. His cheeks were covered with tears.

"We're not doing that again if you're going to fucking eat it." I glanced at Kylo's reflection and turned off the water. "It's gross."

"I used to eat my mother out when we were done having sex," he mumbled, unblinking. He turned his eerie eyes on me. "To prevent pregnancy."

“That’s... That’s not how that works. Do you know that’s not how that works? It’s important to me that you know that’s not how that works, Kylo.”

He smiled slightly and wrapped his arms around my ribs, closing his eyes. “I love you.”

Well, that was a non-answer if I ever heard one. I smiled tightly and patted his arms and we went back to the bedroom with him curled around me like a snake. He followed me straight into bed and nuzzled under my chin, idly drawing my nipple in his mouth as I turned on the TV. I rolled my eyes but wrapped an arm behind his neck and ran my fingers through his hair.

I’d never be able to fix every weird thing about Kylo, but maybe this was a start. Or maybe he was getting better at hiding when he was off the wall, or maybe he was pretending.

“Rey.”

Oh, my real name. I made a noise so he knew I was listening and he shifted up to kiss my jaw.

“I love you,” he mumbled.

“I know.”

His nose traced behind my ear and he kissed me again. “I enjoy raping you.”

My stomach turned. I wasn’t going to dignify that with a response. We lapsed into silence again and Kylo kept leaving soft kisses along my face and neck. He drew his fingertip between my breasts.

“I like when you scream,” he murmured. “I don’t know if I’ll ever stop.” His finger slithered under my breast to circle to my nipple, making it stiffen. “But perhaps there’s a solution...”

“How?” I asked a bit too fast.

Kylo smiled against my neck and his cool breath made my skin tingle. I knew what he was going to say but I didn’t know if I could steel myself.

“Marry me.”

I didn’t respond. I stared off into space while he continued kissing down the edge of my throat to my collarbone. He crept on top of me, shifting the sheets in the quiet house, and knelt between my legs. His lips latched around my nipple and his blue eyes flickered to mine.

My hands trembled at my sides. “And how is that a solution?”

“You’ll be mine,” he cooed. “I won’t feel the need to exert my dominance as often.” He slipped lower, still gazing at me. “And, if you don’t, I’ll torture you until you give in.”

“Romantic.”

He smiled. “Why do you think I’ve been less aggressive this past week, Rey?”

“I have absolutely no idea why you do anything you do, Kylo.”

His tongue slipped through my folds and I took a sharp breath. He wrapped his arms under my thighs and went deeper, watching me trying to contain my reactions. After a few minutes he paused and kissed my quivering thighs and rolled my skin through his teeth.

“You know you’ll never get away from me,” Kylo whispered. He kissed a slow line down my slit and licked a wet line back up, smiling, eyes lidded. “If you marry me willingly, this is how I’ll treat you. If you refuse... I will be more than happy to show you your place for the rest of your life.”

Fuck. I groped for his hair and he let me tangle my fingers in it while he went down on me. It didn’t take me long to climax and I covered my mouth, ashamed and mildly horrified, but Kylo tore my hand away and groaned at the sound of me gasping and moaning. He crept up my body and seized my jaw, steel blue eyes hard, and I panted and squirmed under him.

“Marry me,” he snapped.

I grabbed his wrist with both hands and squeezed my eyes shut. “I... I...”

“You know you can’t leave anyway, Rey.” Kylo pressed his forehead to mine and clenched my jaw tighter. “You’ll never get away from me. You’re mine, and no one else wants you. Marry me and I won’t hurt you anymore. Refuse and we’ll go for a little trip to the closet.”

“No!” I shook my head and started crying. “I can’t do that anymore!”

He cooed and clicked his tongue, changing tactics. “I know, mon chou; I know. I love you—and if you marry me, I won’t rape you anymore.” He kissed my tears. “My poor sweet girl. You sobbed so much during our last closet escapade. Do you remember all the screaming? Being filled up with cum against your will? You don’t want to suffer through that experience again, do you?”

I cried and kept shaking my head and he sighed and rocked between my legs. He was inside me before I realize what was happening and I clung to his back and buried my face in his neck. He crooned in my ear for a while, carefully keeping his weight off me, then leaned back a bit to look at me.

Kylo brushed my hair from my face and smiled. “See? This isn’t so hard, is it? I won’t be forceful with you when we’re married—I will *gently* take what belongs to me.”

Thankfully he wasn’t expecting an instant answer. He kept whispering to me while I cried and remained still underneath him and wondered what exactly I had done to deserve this.

## And miles to go before I sleep

### Chapter Notes

welcome to another unnecessarily graphic chapter of "i am a constant disappointment to my mother"  
i'm your host, a real-life lizard person reeeeeee

“Marry me.”

It was the middle of the night and I was groggily woken up by Kylo’s body pressing against my back. The blankets were so soft and warm and comforting that I hardly registered my pajama pants down by my ankles and the urgent, hard heat between my thighs. I frowned and yawned, still trying to get my bearings, then took a sharp, surprised breath when he gently pushed inside me.

Cold, sticky wetness clung to my inner thighs—lube. Kylo groaned into my hair and held my hip to give him a better angle as he slipped deeper and deeper. My eyes were practically bugging out of my head as I gasped and squirmed at the intrusion, fisting the sheets, trying to pin on an emotion. Anger? Sadness? I didn’t know which one to pick.

The sliding door was open and a cool breeze filtered inside, drawing a shiver from me as Kylo shushed me and slowly rolled his hips. It wasn’t violent like usual but it was still completely unwelcome. Tears welled up in my eyes when his hand slithered between my legs and my body responded to his touch. I was so exhausted. Kylo kissed my neck and struggled closer when an involuntary whimper left my lips.

“This isn’t so bad, is it?” he whispered.

“N-No.” I swallowed nervously and stared into the darkness. “This is all you’ll do?”

“Yes, mon chou—and you’re only expected to lie there and take it like a good girl.”

I rubbed my eyes blearily and shrugged. “Okay.”

Kylo hummed appreciatively and went back to what he was doing. I did exactly what he said and laid there with him draped half on top of me, hoping he wasn’t lying for once. He drew his hand from between my legs to grasp my hip and whispered in my ear about not letting me finish and I pretended to whine about it. That was what he wanted.

He climaxed with a low groan a while later, while I was fighting the urge to fall back asleep. Kylo took a few deep, steadying breaths and kissed my temple, then gently withdrew. His long arm wrapped around my waist and I fell asleep with my thighs still smeared in lube and cum.

“Rey.”

Ugh—I barely opened my eyes to find the room was getting lighter and I was lying on my back with no clothes on. Kylo was already on top of me and I whimpered at his warm weight, fingers alighting on his ribs, and was surprised to find he was naked, too. He murmured in my ear, arm moving between my legs, then slipped inside me without another word.

I moaned and squirmed to meet his thrusts, too delirious to care about anything other than the hungry heat between us. Kylo kissed my neck and shifted closer but still kept his rhythm slow and steady. It was a nice change of pace from the usual punishing sex we had. I ran my fingers through his hair and he did the same to me, tilting my head to get access to my jaw and layer kisses up my cheek.

“Marry me,” he cooed. “I’ll let you come after you agree.”

“That doesn’t seem like an even exchange.”

He smiled into my skin. “That depends on how badly you want it.”

Kylo took his time, not speaking much else until he spilled inside me again with a low ‘fuck!’ and shallow, quick thrusts. He kissed down my body until his mouth was between my legs where his cum was leaking out of me and pooling on the sheets. His blue eyes stayed on mine and I watched with mixed horror and maybe excitement as he licked a line up my slit before putting his mouth on me completely. Soon his lips were coated with my juices and his cum and I was panting and writhing before I knew it. Fuck.

He stopped abruptly when my thighs started quivering and licked his lips, smirking smugly. I eagerly sat up when he rose to his knees and beckoned for me to come closer. Kylo was pretty much insatiable. He pumped his cock a few times, eyes rolling and puffing, then gathered the hair at the back of my head as I took him in my mouth. His long fingers brushed my hair back to watch me until I had built up so much saliva that I was slurping on him like a cheap hooker.

I shifted my hips uncomfortably and reached down to masturbate. Kylo gently took both of my wrists and placed my hands at his base, smiling and brushing my hair back again.

“I’ll tell you once,” he murmured, “that you are not allowed to do that.”

My spine tingled and I nodded, working my hands in while I sucked his cock. He grew harder and panted louder until I felt a quick twitch of his head in my mouth before he spurted inside without warning. Kylo gasped and fisted my hair, pumping my lips on him to squeeze out every last drop on my tongue. My eyes watered and I wanted to spit it out but he touched my cheek to make me look up at him.

“Keep it on your tongue until I tell you to swallow.” He carefully slipped out of my mouth and stroked my lips with the head of his cock, sticky with cum. “Do you like the taste?”

I nodded, puffing my cheeks like a squirrel. Tears had already run down my cheeks from the pressure of having Kylo in my mouth. He wasn’t exactly small.

He smiled and tapped my cheek with his head even though he wouldn’t be hard again anytime soon. “Good girl.” It drifted in a sticky line back to my lips and pressed softly. “A kiss, please, mon chou?”

The awful sticky salty cum in my mouth shifted to my other cheek so I could kiss Kylo’s cock. He kept doing that for a while, stroking my face and occasionally asking me to kiss it or worm my tongue through my lips to lick the underside of the head. My heart pounded when he began pumping in long motions until he was hard yet again.

Kylo’s blue eyes were bright. “Keep your mouth tight, little one. Don’t spill a drop.”

I took sharp breaths through my nose as he forced himself through my lips and past my teeth. The cum swirled around in my mouth and my eyes watered again as Kylo set his rhythm, petting my

head and gazing down at me. Some of it slithered down my throat and it began leaking out of my mouth the closer he came to finishing again. He smiled widely, hungry, and held the back of my head as he swelled and spilled inside my mouth with a low grunt. It felt hotter and thicker for whatever reason.

Kylo withdrew and wormed his fingers to my bottom teeth to yank my jaw open. Cum drooled out of my mouth and ran in a river down my chin and neck and across my chest. He smeared some on my lips and told me to swallow whatever was left. I did, wincing.

“Fuck.” He kissed my forehead hard. “Fuck, this is hot.” Then he glanced over his shoulder at the closet and back to me. “Come.”

Reluctant, I got out of bed on my wobbly legs and slowly followed Kylo to the fucking closet. He pushed open the door and let me walk inside on my own, still covered in cum and stuck with the taste of it in my mouth and the sensation of it dripping out of me. He murmured ‘kneel’ and I kneeled. Handcuffs around the wrists, yada yada, and he stood in the doorway for a moment to stare at me.

“I love you,” he said, like repeating it would make it true.

“I know.”

Kylo knelt after a minute and dipped his lips to my nipples. I closed my eyes, at first trying to float away, then decided to bury my face in his hair and let it happen. Whatever. There were worse things he could do, and it only ever hurt or distressed me because I resisted. Did it really matter that he thought of me as his mother? Why did I even care?

I kissed his head, nuzzling closer into his scalp, and he started pushing me on my back. When I laid down obediently he decided to let my wrists free and I tangled my fingers in his hair to drag him back to my breasts. Kylo groaned and settled between my sticky thighs.

It went on like that for most of the day. He had to take longer and longer breaks to recover after finishing in or on me and he’d lie next to me in the dark closet to stroke between my legs until I climaxed in breathy moans. There was cum *everywhere*. By the time night fell I was literally drenched in it or had it drooling out of my mouth or pooling between my thighs. I rubbed them together, delirious from either exertion or something Kylo slipped in my water. My eyes roamed blindly and I licked my chin to taste more cum as I clumsily slid my fingers between my legs.

“She’s much less hysterical today than normal.”

“Has the wound healed?”

I frowned, struggling to open my eyes. I didn’t recognize a second male voice that was deep like Kylo’s.

“For the most part,” Kylo said. “She’s nearly ready.”

The door slid open and light blinded me for a moment. I whimpered and squirmed on the floor while Kylo cooed and clicked his tongue in a bizarre effort to comfort me. He leaned on the door, eyeing me with sadistic pleasure, and glanced at the man standing beside him.

He was tall, too, with the same black hair as Kylo, but startling dark eyes instead of blue. His skin was tawny and unblemished and he had sharp, angular features without the predatory nature of Kylo’s face. He was dressed in a black linen shirt and jeans with his hands in his pockets. He studied me while Kylo watched his face and I was too exhausted to care about being naked.

“Rey,” Kylo trilled, “this is my friend Erik. He’d like to know if we’ve had fun today.”

I nodded, smiling stupidly. Kylo beamed and noticed my hand idly moving between my thighs. It seemed to widen his smirk and he nudged Erik, nodding towards my legs.

“If it wasn’t so addictive, I’d give her GHB every day.” Kylo cooed to me in approval. “Keep going, mon chou. Use my cum as lube.”

Erik’s face had seemed impassive at first but I caught a rather repulsed expression before he caught me staring at him. He smiled tightly and I mewled and arched my back. His gaze shifted away and he cleared his throat, peering into the closet to see what exactly was inside. Kylo kept staring at me, drumming his fingers on his biceps, blue eyes riveted on my worming fingers.

“I’m sure you’d prefer that I don’t watch,” Erik offered, looking anywhere but at me.

“Why?” Kylo asked coldly. “Can you not appreciate what I’ve done to her?” Then his face lightened, and he edged inside the closet with his arms folded over his chest, circling me. “Do you like the two of us watching you, Rey? You enjoy the attention, don’t you?”

“Yes,” I panted.

His sharp eyes caught Erik’s uncomfortable expression and Kylo’s smile took a bestial edge. As I’d noted before, Kylo was a shark in the water—and when he smelled blood, he’d kill the wounded fish.

He pouted to me in a condescending way. “Erik has had such a long journey to get here. Perhaps you can give him some attention.”

“Okay,” I mumbled, fighting to stay awake.

Obviously it was lost to me, but not to Erik. He straightened up and his face went blank.

“I wouldn’t insult you that way,” Erik said. “You’ve clearly marked her as yours.” He laughed and it took on a nervous edge that he couldn’t hide.

“Hm. Pity.” Kylo gazed at me. “Any one of us would jump at the opportunity. But I suppose you just don’t quite fit in, anyway. Right, Kasparian?”

Erik stared at Kylo and looked down at me. I was close to climaxing and they both watched me whimper and writhe in the blankets as I finished a minute or two later, moaning and flexing my hips. Erik’s face was still blank and he kept his eyes on me while addressing Kylo.

“What are my limits?” Erik asked.

Kylo shrugged. “I’m not sure. You’ll know you’ve gone too far if I beat you to death.”

Drowsy, I reached out for Kylo, wiggling my fingers in weak, slow motions. He beamed again and took my hands in his to kiss the tops then knelt beside me. I tried to crawl in his lap and he gently pushed me back down in the blankets, blue eyes searching mine. My mouth opened, tacky and gross.

“Good girl,” he laughed, “but none of that. What do you think I should let Erik do to you?” Then he sighed, smiling, and answered his own question. “Well, I think I may slit his throat if he has sex with you, but... shall we try?”



Erik was stony-faced up until Kylo's gaze fell on him. Erik nodded and stepped past Kylo to loom over me, yawning and rolling drowsily on the floor. His jaw shifted. Kylo was watching from the closet door, smirking at Erik as he unzipped his pants and knelt between my ankles. I smiled vaguely and he smiled back but I noticed his lips trembled. Was he going to cry?

It was eerily silent in the closet while I squirmed in the sheets and watched a myriad of emotions flit across Erik's dark features; emotions Kylo couldn't see from his vantage point. He raised an eyebrow when Erik chewed on the inside of his cheek, then slowly sucked on his long index finger and leaned over me. I panted and gazed languidly at him.

Kylo suddenly slapped the back of Erik's head. "No."

"I have to make sure she's re—"

Another slap. Erik clenched his jaw and squeezed his eyes shut. I giggled a little.

"No, you don't," Kylo said offhandedly. "It doesn't matter. Would you make sure an ant is comfortable before you crush it under your boot? Only livestock need to be prepared before slaughter to ensure a better texture. The meat is still tender if you rip a woman apart."

Erik sat back, averting his eyes. "I need a condom."

"Erik thinks you're dirty, Rey," Kylo said, pouting at me again.

"I kind of am," I mumbled. I burst out laughing and waved my hands vaguely at my whole body. It wasn't funny, but I was still laughing.

My thoughts swirled the drain as Kylo slapped the back of Erik's head again and threw him away from me. I squeaked in surprise when Kylo lifted me into his arms and left the closet, leaving Erik trailing behind us. We went in the master bathroom and started the water before carefully laying me in the bathtub, helping me sit up straight and lean on the back of it. I yawned.

Erik leaned on the wall and silently watched Kylo wash me for a while. The water was warm and smelled like flowers and I dozed off, only to wake up with Kylo pushing a toothbrush in my mouth. I choked on it for a second and took it from his hand to lazily brush them myself. The weird taste was scrubbed away and I gargled water before Kylo led me into the bed, now with fresh sheets.

"Ant and boot, hm?" Erik said.

I settled into the pillows and Kylo leaned over to kiss my cheek.

"Every once in a great while, you'll meet a woman who's worth extra effort." Kylo tucked the sheets in around my shoulders and sauntered off. "You still have to keep her in her place, of course—make sure she never feels *entirely* comfortable or safe—but it's an easy enough feat to accomplish. The further you break them down, the easier it is to make them come crawling back."

"A common abuse tactic."

"Yes, because it's nearly foolproof. It's as simple as beating her so deeply into the dirt that she thinks she's always been a part of it and deserves nothing more. Then offering silly things like privacy seems like generosity and soon she's lying about the burns on her back and letting you spend the day drenching her in cum. The longer you rinse and repeat the cycle, the more she comes to rely on you. The constant chaos forces her to cling to whoever she can—even if it invites further abuse."

None of it registered with me. I yawned and snuggled into the pillows and felt Kylo gently grasp my foot through the sheets and rub it. My heart swelled happily and I smiled at the tender, casual touch. It had been so long since I felt hands that weren't bringing me pain and suffering.

Erik shifted by the wall—I heard his belt clink. “She has a support system at home. They’ll be looking for her sooner or later. Worrying, calling the police.”

“Rey isn’t going anywhere,” Kylo said coolly.

“Clearly she won’t leave of her own volition, but her family will interfere sooner or later. Hasn’t your cousin been sniffing around, too?”

“Alex and I had a long, interesting chat about his son and how unfortunate it would be if he was harmed. You know how dangerous the city can be for a child.”

Sleep was quickly overtaking me. I faded away to their mingled deep voices, hopefully into a dream far sweeter than reality.

## And miles to go before I sleep.

### Chapter Notes

rey deserves some erik luv  
two more chapters maybe

also, pierre/kylo and natalie/rei do have a traumatic bond. i know people are frustrated with rei, which makes total sense, but she is deeply disturbed and heavily abused and has formed this demented bond with pierre.

When I woke up, I vomited over the side of the bed.

It was cold—Kylo wasn't with me. I retched and coughed, spitting out foul-tasting puke, and trembled as I wiped my mouth and struggled to sit up. The drugs he fed me must've upset my stomach. I cried and weakly grappled for the edge of the bed to slip out and stumble to the bathroom. Once there, I puked some more and curled around the toilet to scream and cry. I hated Kylo Ren.

I slapped along the linoleum floor and dragged myself up on the sink to brush my teeth with trembling hands. Everything came back to me—Kylo smirking and cumming all over my body; Erik's anxious stare between my ankles; and Kylo's admission to his abusive tactics keeping me where he wanted me. I threw my toothbrush when I was done and screamed into the mirror, furious with myself and downright outraged with him. I fucking hated Kylo Ren.

Sobbing, I dragged myself out of the bathroom to the bedroom and was surprised to find the vomit had been cleaned up. Blinking, I glanced up and saw Erik Kasparian standing by the door. He was the same sharp-faced stranger from the night before. My heart skipped a beat.

"We're alone, Rei," Erik said after a beat. "He's gone to Senlis to visit his cousin."

That made me even more anxious. I glared at Erik and crawled into bed while he watched silently, dark eyes assessing my movements like a calculator. He remained by the door as I settled under the sheets and swallowed back another bout of vomiting. Gross.

I glared at him. "You better not try to touch me. He'll kill you."

"I know. I have no interest, anyway." Erik folded his arms, tapping his fingers on his biceps. "Why do you allow him to do these things to you, Rei?"

"...I have no other choice."

Erik raised his eyebrows. "No?"

"No," I reiterated, glowering.

He smiled slightly and left the room, walking down the hall without another word. I clenched my jaw and hesitated before following him. My throat was dry and I wanted breakfast. Kylo hadn't given me any food during his revolting 'escapades' yesterday.

I edged into the kitchen. Erik was cooking at the stove and didn't turn to look at me. I narrowed my eyes and sat in a stool at the island, still deeply suspicious of this stranger. As always, I was wearing a dress shirt of Kylo's and a pair of his sweatpants. It'd be nice to wear my own clothes.

Erik silently handed me a plate of eggs, bacon, and toast a few minutes later. He loaded the dishes into the dishwasher and leaned on the counter to text someone, not paying me any mind, while I stared at the food in front of me. Was it laced with drugs? Would he take me away from Kylo to something far worse? Maybe he was here to help me...

"You've formed a traumatic bond with Kylo, Rey."

I blinked and peered at Erik. "...A what?"

His dark eyes flickered to me briefly. "He's using gaslighting, intermittent love, and control to back you into a corner of desperation. You're on a hormonal rollercoaster that's become addictive—you don't want to leave, even if you won't admit it—and he's dragging you back and forth on a string."

For some reason, the truth made me furious. I irately dug into my breakfast and abandoned the empty plate when I was done to go back upstairs. Erik wandered along after me, leaning on the bedroom door when I dejectedly crawled back into bed. I didn't want to stay. I just couldn't get away from Kylo. What was the point in trying anymore?

"I hate being here," I said tersely after some quiet.

"No, you don't." Erik cocked his head, smiling faintly. "You love him. You like the attention."

I bristled. "You think I *like* being raped?!"

"It's not rape anymore, even if you feign resistance. You enjoy it—but you won't admit it."

"Fuck you!"

Erik stood there without saying a word while I launched into a tirade about Kylo and how much I hated him. It felt rehearsed and both of us knew it, but I kept going until I ran out of excuses. We lapsed into deeper silence until I burst into tears and hid my face in my hands.

It was awful. It was disgusting, and misogynistic, and *wrong*, but I loved Kylo. I felt bad for him. I was attached to him beyond reason, well into the territory of illness, and I didn't care. Maybe I would take whatever he could dish out. If no one tore us apart, I would for the rest of my life. Kylo could probably beat me within an inch of my life and I still wouldn't tell the police or try to escape.

I screamed and clawed at my hair until Erik ripped my wrists away and held them still while I continued to sob. His grip was strong and hard like Kylo's, but he didn't try to go any further. He waited my wailing abated into sniffles and choking before speaking again.

"You're not a bad person," Erik said gently. "You're a teenage girl and Kylo is a practiced violent psychopath who knows how to manipulate you. His actions are calculated and deliberate—he preys on your weakness to keep you exactly where he wants you. He will kill you sooner or later."

My chest tightened and I went back to shrieking and sobbing and leaned into Erik's chest. He tentatively returned my embrace with his long arms and I screamed until my throat was raw. I hated Kylo. I fucking hated him. But I didn't... even if I wanted to. He was wildly unstable and violent but I felt so bad for him and part of me hoped I'd be able to heal all of his pain, even if I knew it was beyond me. I hated Kylo Ren—but I knew I never really *could* hate him.

I clung to Erik's gray dress shirt and arched to kiss his thin lips. He drew back for a second, breath catching, then returned the third or fourth kiss. His mouth was tentative and gentle, nothing like Kylo's. He kissed me back for a few minutes before drawing away and rising from the bed.

I cried and yanked him back to the bed. Erik sat down hard and groaned when I kissed him again, hungry to feel someone other than Kylo. He was the only man I'd ever slept with. Erik grasped my jaw gently and kept kissing me, briefly breaking to check his watch, then came back more passionate than before. He murmured when I kept sobbing and rolled over on top of me in the bed when I tugged his hips.

Erik hovered over me, frowning. "...Are you sure?"

I nodded and held back tears. "I don't want to go my whole life only knowing him."

"...Okay. I won't hurt you, Rey." He leaned back, unbuttoning his shirt, and smiled weakly. "We should hurry, though. Who knows when he'll come back?"

True. I yanked off Kylo's shirt and dragged Erik's mouth back to mine when he slipped out of his dress shirt. He stretched closer and helped me unbutton and yank off his jeans before we peeled off my sweatpants. It wasn't romantic or anything. Erik kissed up my jaw and angled his hips between my thighs, and I panted with tense, nervous excitement. His body was hot and hard like Kylo's.

"Condom?" Erik whispered in my ear.

"No," I whispered back. "Cum in me."

He laughed, something Kylo never did, and tenderly rocked his hips. I whimpered like I always did with Kylo and Erik murmured 'louder' so I moaned into the quiet house when he began rolling his hard cock inside me. It was surreal. I wasn't having sex with Kylo.

"Good girl," Erik murmured. "Very good. I want to hear you."

I nodded and let the sounds escape my throat that Kylo always suppressed. Erik buried his face in the pillows and conquered inch by inch of flesh until he was buried up to the hilt inside me. I panted and clung to his back and squirmed into his thrusts. Holy shit. I was having sex with a different man.

Erik groaned in his throat and kissed up my throat. "Fuck, Rey—you're so tight. Do you want me to cum in you? Tell me."

"...Yes?" I squeaked.

"Louder. Be confident."

I clenched my jaw and moaned 'YES!' as loud as I could. Erik thrust faster and panted into the pillows while I clung to his back and kept letting my voice loose. I screamed and laughed and yanked on his short black hair and angled my hips until I came with a high-pitched wail. He grunted, nodding, and snapped 'come again' in my ear, and a few minutes later, I did.

Erik laughed, fucking me harder. "Come on, Rey—I know you can do better than that."

I shook my head lazily. "I can't. I can't."

"Mhm. You can." He licked along my jaw. "What are your fantasies, Mrs. Ren?"

Panting, I shrugged under his assault. “I... I don’t know. I do what Kylo wants.”

“Mommy-daddy shit, then. Works for me.”

Erik slipped into demanding I call him daddy. It did weird things to me and I obeyed, giggling with him when I had a pleasant, body-wide orgasm for the third time. Fuck, he was good. I clung to his shoulders while he crooned in my ear about how beautiful I was. It didn’t feel fake like it did with Kylo.

Erik puffed through his teeth. “May I cum in you?”

“Yes—yes!”

“You want me to fill you up, Rey?” he panted. “Do you?”

I nodded spastically and Erik groaned deep in his chest, and I felt his cock twitch inside me. He grunted, thrusting fast for a few seconds, and I closed my eyes and smiled. My fingers drew gently across his broad back while he whimpered and spilled his hot spend in me. Fuck...

After we were done, Erik suggested that I take a pregnancy test. I shrugged and went in the bathroom to do so, pacing around while I waited with his cum dripping on my thighs. If it was positive, it—

Two blue lines developed on the test. I stared, horrified, when Erik knocked on the door. No. No. NO NO NO. I’d throw myself down the fucking stairs—I’d fucking die!

“Rey?” Erik called gently.

I snapped the test in half and tried to bury it in the garbage. Erik was outside the door and he embraced me when I sealed my lips over his. He stroked my hair when I went down on him and after he ate me out and I finished, his hard cock was inside me again. I clung to him to enjoy the first genuinely consensual sex I’d ever had. Erik gazed at me, dark eyes hungry.

“Are you pregnant?” he whispered as he tenderly rocked between my thighs.

“...Maybe,” I admitted. My eyes watered. “I don’t want to be.”

Erik sighed and kissed my forehead. “I know, Rey. I know.”

The two of us climaxed again around the same time. I pulled Erik closer and pretended the test was a result of his cum, not Kylo’s, and he grunted loud and hard, embracing the fantasy. My pussy trembled around his thrusts and I whimpered when I felt him spurt inside me, hot and hungry and hard. His movements were still kinder and softer than Kylo’s.

We slipped apart. Erik kissed down my chest and left the bed and I went to the bathroom to clean myself. When I emerged, my chest tightened.

Erik was sitting on the floor near the closet and Kylo had the two broken halves of the pregnancy test in his hands. He smiled, blue eyes lighting up, and smiled.

“Well, Rey,” Kylo cooed, “it seems we’re expecting.”

# I Spit on Your Grave

## Chapter Notes

YAYYYYYY THANK U FOR FOLLOWING THIS INSANE SHIT LMAO

there will be an epilogue..... whenever i get to it lol  
depending on the level of interest i can do mae's story, but i mean, it can't be reylo  
OR CAN IT  
i guess it can lmao

Erik was covered in blood. He spit some out on the floor and leaned his head back, shaking it and staring at me, mouthing 'I'm sorry.' I trembled and stared at Kylo as he dropped the pregnancy test and sauntered towards me. I backed away and burst into sobs as he came closer and closer.

Kylo pouted, feigning innocence. "What's wrong, mon chou? Aren't you happy?"

"I can't have a baby," I cried. "I can't!"

"You can, and you will." He seized my throat, squeezing, and smiled coldly. "Did you consider the consequences when you let Erik fuck you?"

"Kylo," Erik called weakly, "I forced her—"

Kylo rounded on Erik with his knife drawn and I jumped on his back, screaming and wrapping an arm around his throat. He staggered, losing his balance, and Erik managed to get to his feet and advance toward us. Erik withdrew a needle from his shirt pocket and dug the barrel into Kylo's upper arm. I clung to Kylo while he panted and swore until he collapsed to his knees and passed out.

Slowly, I rose from Kylo's prone form, trembling. Erik met my eyes and jerked his head toward the door. Yes—I had to go.

We found my passport and left without anything else. I cried on our way to the airport and Erik touched my thigh gently, reminding me that fleeing was brave, but I felt like I betrayed Kylo. We got on the plane and settled in first class and Erik had to talk me down from a few panic attacks.

Pregnant—I was pregnant. I couldn't stop thinking about it as Erik returned me to my mom and Rian and they cried and hugged me. I couldn't stop thinking about the little piece of Kylo blooming inside me like poison until I felt her move for the first time, and realized she wasn't poison. I cried and hugged my growing belly on the bathroom floor. She pushed her hand on my stomach to touch my palm.

Mom encouraged me to have an abortion, as did everyone else with a rational mind. But I let myself grow rounder and rounder, muttering about how it was a hard choice, and sang to Maeve at night. She would turn and reach out for me like she couldn't wait to see my face. I'd cry and hug her in my womb.

Erik hovered in the area. Once or twice he came to visit me and helped me process my confusing emotions: all the guilt and fear and rage. He said Kylo wasn't reckless enough to attack me in my

own home, but I knew he was wrong. Kylo was biding his time.

I slept with Erik again when I was finally getting a pronounced baby bump. He hesitated, but we had gentle sex like we had before. It wasn't emotional or anything—I just wanted to forget Kylo. I tried to cover my stomach to keep Maeva from wheeling around but Erik murmured that he didn't mind. She fell quiet and I imagined she was sucking her thumb.

“Fuck, Rey.”

Erik kissed the arch of my jaw, thrusting gently, trying to avoid my growing belly. He kept his hands away from my breasts since it just reminded me of Kylo. I whimpered and moaned and pushed down on him as he rocked slowly, then I felt a bizarre jerking sensation in my womb.

Erik noticed, too, and leaned back to frown at my stomach. I ran my hands across it, wishing I could lower my head and listen, but he did it for me. He pressed an ear to my engorged stomach and started laughing. I laughed, too, still worried something was wrong.

He pulled out and laid down to keep listening. “She’s hiccupping, Rey.”

“Oh my god—seriously?!” I put my hands on my belly on either side of his head and felt Maeva shift with the force of another hiccup. Oh my god. My baby was really there, and she was hiccupping!

Both of us laughed while she kept doing it until she seemed to fall asleep. I drifted off and woke up to Erik eating me out and he kept going until I climaxed with a soft whimper. He waved me off when I tried to do the same for him and went back to listening to Maeva.

He sighed. “Amazing, isn’t it? One act can create this.”

“Yeah,” I mumbled, “it’s pretty amazing feeling her move.”

Erik was quiet for a beat before speaking again. “...Maybe I’ll have this one day, with someone I love. Maybe I won’t. I’ve been considering a vasectomy.”

“You can visit this one.” I yawned, shrugging. “Her father won’t be much help.”

Kylo was imprisoned in France. He was arrested for domestic violence not soon after Erik and I fled the house. I knew he could escape. He was waiting. He wanted Maeva to be born first.

Work drew Erik away from me. We had a friendly goodbye and I waved from mom and Rian’s doorstep as he drove away. He was such a nice man. I hoped he met a woman who would make him happy.

Time drew on. I spent my nights watching TV and texting Amanda, trying to get into my old life, but she was away overseas on an internship. Mom would fuss over me and Rian looked uncomfortable and avoided me. Kira avoided me and my burgeoning belly, too.

Near my due date, when I was home alone, the front door opened.

“Hey, Kira,” I called lazily. “Want to watch a movie?”

Shoes clicked into the living room. “Your sister isn’t here, mon chou.”

I tried to jump to my feet but the enormous girth of my stomach kept me from doing so. Kylo dropped his knife with a clatter and settled between my knees, whispering, brushing my hair from



my face. He stared at my stomach hungrily and I screamed and slapped him until he pinned my hands on either side of my hips. He edged closer, gaunt and eerie.

Kylo groaned. "Oh, Rey. Look at this." He let go of my wrists to touch my stomach with trembling hands and rubbed his cheek on my dress. "Look at this. Beautiful."

Maeva chose that moment to thrash and landed a kick on her father's jaw. He groaned and edged closer, kissing along my floral dress and laughing breathlessly whenever our daughter lashed out at him. She wasn't doing it deliberately; she just hated being bothered when we were resting.

I couldn't run, so I cried. Kylo shushed me and tugged down my dress to draw my nipple in his mouth, purring when the thin, watery milk I'd begun producing leaked out. He sucked until it was dry and went onto the other to do the same thing. I hated him.

He smacked his lips when he was done, smiling faintly. "I served my sentence. Let's go."

"No!" I snapped. "I'm not going anywhere with you!"

Kylo dragged me to my feet. I was afraid of Maeva being hurt and followed him out the door to his car, where he already had a car seat in place. He smiled when I winced as she twisted again.

We settled in Oregon, which was fortuitous because Maeva made her grand entrance a week later. Kylo put me in the bathtub and I had to give birth with the last person I wanted to be there. But he was calm and soothing and thankfully, it happened without incident. She came screaming into the world, tiny fists flailing, and I was relieved to see Kylo was mystified. Any emotion was good.

She had a shock of black hair and Kylo's bright blue eyes. She whimpered and latched onto my breast while Kylo cleaned up the afterbirth. Nothing could make a serial killer nauseous. He kissed the top of my head and hers and sat beside me outside the tub while the water drained. I was trembling and amazed that I'd actually done it. I had a baby. Like, a real baby.

Kylo offered me ice chips. "I'm so proud of you, Rey. She's beautiful."

"Yeah, I mumbled, drowsily chewing. "She is."

"Rest. I'll swaddle her when she's through eating."

I was too exhausted to worry about Kylo imitating his mother. When I woke up, I was clean and in bed, and Kylo was pacing the room with Mae in his arms. He noticed me watching and smiled.

"Go back to sleep," he murmured. "She's fine."

...Alright. Drowsy, I nodded and passed out again.

I woke up to Kylo on top of me, drinking from my breast. He paused when he heard Maeva cry and got out of bed to bring her in the room. I fell asleep again with him holding her to my chest so she could eat. The first night of motherhood was peaceful and quiet. The ensuing days were not.

Maeva screamed from her bedroom and I was sobbing and trying to get away from her father. Kylo bent me over the edge of our bed and tried to force himself inside me. The pain was blistering; unreal. I screamed even louder than Mae and he draped across my back, groaning. All the small cuts and tears from giving birth were torn back open and I genuinely wanted to die.

Kylo slapped me across the face when I turned and tried to hit him. I fell on the floor, crying, and he left the room to check on Mae. I crawled to the bathroom to settle in a bath and the warm water

helped the pain somewhat. He sang to her from the other room and her shrieking settled to snuffles.

My fists clenched. He was keeping me away from my screaming daughter. I'd fucking kill him.

I stepped out of the bath, dripping wet, and slapped down the hall and downstairs to the kitchen. Kylo followed behind me with some stupid insult on his tongue, gently bobbing Maeva, and I took her in my arms to let her nurse straight from my breast. He circled me, smiling.

"Oh, Rey," Kylo cooed, "don't tell me that hurt? I figured your pussy could take a pounding by now."

Silent, I reached up to take a pan down like I was going to make breakfast. Kylo stood in front of me with his arms folded, blue eyes bright and evil, and he smirked. I stared at him with his daughter nursing and cocked my hand back to swiftly bring the pan across his head.

It collided with a loud clang and Kylo staggered, blinking, so I furiously brought the pan down on top of his head. He fell to the floor in a heap, skull pouring blood, and I turned the blood-stained pain in my palm. Maeva just kept eating, making quiet, gentle suckling sounds.

I tossed the pan, gazing at nothing, and grabbed his keys from the tray near the door. I went upstairs to prep Mae a baby bag and get dressed and when I came back, Kylo was still out cold. I stared blankly at his languid body and shifted my shirt when Mae was done eating. I draped her on my shoulder and burped her, then swaddled her up and smiled when she started hiccupping. I loved her. No one would keep us apart.

"Let's go home," I murmured, tapping her tiny nose. I took out my cell phone and didn't look back as I dialed 911. "Grandma and grandpa and Aunt Kira can't wait to meet you."

The door shut behind us, and the most gruesome chapter of my life ended with a slam.

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